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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 470. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 1ST, 1898. ONE PENNY.

NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND DR TIBBLES' Vi-Cocoa

Merit, and Merit alone, has made the Food Beverage, Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, a Proved Success, and the remarkable unsolicited evidence from Nurses in all parts of the country, here with published, supports our statement that its merits have been recognised to an extent hitherto unknown in the history of any preparation. One thing is certain. Nothing has ever been discovered that can approach it in giving lightness of heart, joy of life, fleetness of foot, and that general feeling of comfort which only comes from a full capacity to enjoy every pleasure, moral, intellectual, and physical.

MEDICAL TESTIMONY.

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The BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL says: "Vi-Cocoa is a very palatable beverage of great stimulating and sustaining properties."

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A Real Pick-Me-Up.
Nurse F. GEORGE, Devonport Hill, Congleton: "I have tried Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, and think it is a real 'pick-me-up,' and intend to use no other."

Gives Great Satisfaction.
Nurse WILKINSON, 30, Russell Street, Clitheroe: "Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa gives every satisfaction, and I shall not fail to recommend it to my friends and patients."

Both Meat and Drink.
Nurse WEAVER, The Parsonage, Rickmansworth, Herts: "My brother has tried Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, and thinks it is both meat and drink."

Great Benefit to Invalids.
Nurse VILLAGE, Linton, near Maidstone: "I have proved Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa to be of great benefit to Invalids, as it is so easily digested."

The Best ever Tasted.
Nurse E. BOWDEN, 8, Evershot Road, Tollington Park, N.: "I consider Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa the very best cocoa that I have tasted. I find it more refreshing and more invigorating than any other. I have been giving it to my patients, and shall certainly recommend it to both my patients and personal friends."

For Excellence.
Nurse GILKES, 11, St. Paul's Square, Southsea: "I think Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa is excellent, and very good for those who suffer from indigestion. This I know practically."

No Praise Too High.
Nurse SAFFREY, The Cottage, Hoddesdon Road, Belvedere, Kent: "I am pleased to say I think more of the merits of Dr. Tibbles' than even the praise already bestowed upon it."

For Physical and Mental Suffering.
Nurse CLARE "The Laurels," Langley: "I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the value of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, as I find it most beneficial to persons suffering physically and mentally. It is most nutritive and extremely pleasant to take, and I shall strongly recommend it to my patients."

Nourishing and Stimulating.
Nurse HARRINGTON, Coxhoe, Durham: "Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa possesses good nourishing and stimulating qualities. I shall certainly recommend it to my patients and friends."

Invaluable for Night Duty.
Nurse WILCOX, Bradford Street, Birmingham: "I always take a cup of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa when on night duty."

Highly Pleased with It.
Nurse ROBERTS, Ryecroft Villa, 20, St. James's Street, Southport: "We are highly pleased with Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa. I think it possesses good nourishing and stimulating qualities. I shall recommend it to all my patients and friends."

Refreshing, Stimulating, Pleasant.
Nurse SUNDERLAND, Shewview Villa, Cheam Road, Sutton, Surrey: "I have tried Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, and find it a refreshing, stimulating, and pleasant beverage. I shall have pleasure in recommending it to my friends and relations."

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Nurse SCHOFIELD, Rathgar, Dublin: "I have tested Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa and find it excellent, and will recommend to my patients and friends."

For Sick Room and Breakfast Table.
Nurse B. BEASLEY, 31, Blenheim Gardens Reading: "I wish to say that I have found Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa of great value both in the sick room and on the breakfast table. I use it myself, and can honestly say that it is the most genuine and superior cocoa that can be obtained. I always advise my patients to try it, and when they do they find that it is better and suits their digestion better than any cocoa they have ever tried. I shall always have great pleasure in recommending Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, as I am sure it has no equal."

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Nurse SESSIONS, Cotteswold House, Cirencester: "I have tested Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, and like it very much. I shall have pleasure in recommending it to all my patients and friends."

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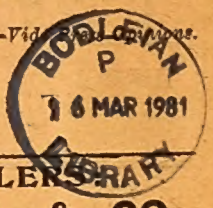

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON

No. 470.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending January 1st, 1898.

A Triple Crime.

THE *Theatre de la Folie* in Brussels was crowded with a brilliant audience in honour of the reigning favourite, Léontia, a dancer of bewitching grace and beauty. The Duc de Simeuse was said to have discovered her and she had quickly become the rage.

"Who's the tall man with Colonel du Berry?" asked a lady in the stalls.

Her husband looked at the stage-box and saw the two men in question. The colonel was a well-known figure in fashionable circles, but the other, a man of striking appearance and distinguished bearing, was a stranger.

"Oh, that's the Comte de Fervacques, I expect. They say he's a millionaire and a widower to boot. He's just come from Paris, and will be quite an acquisition."

Facing the box occupied by the colonel and his friend was one containing two ladies, the younger of whom soon attracted the latter's attention. In answer to his inquiries he was told that they were the Duchesse de Simeuse and her daughter Thérèse, and at the sound of the name a curious expression passed over his face.

"Do you know them?" asked the Comte de Fervacques.

"Oh, yes. They are charming. I am going to a large ball there on the twenty-fifth."

"Could you get me an invitation?" asked the other after a pause.

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His friend laughed. "I've no doubt I could, but, *mon ami*, you are just too late in the field, for the lovely Thérèse is engaged to the young Baron Vanlinden."

"That will not make their society any the less charming to me."

Thérèse de Simeuse was considered cold and proud. Her beauty was of the essentially aristocratic type, with regular features, delicate nostrils, and small, shapely ears. Her eyes were perfect in form and colour, but their usual expression was unemotional, and the haughty poise of her small head showed her full appreciation of her exalted rank. But under this cold exterior beat a warm heart, and were hidden the generous impulses of a noble nature. The knowledge of her mother's sufferings at the hands of a weak, dissipated husband, had made her grave beyond her years, and had lifted the charmed veil that hides married life from most young French girls.

The night of the ball at the Hôtel Simeuse arrived. It was a most dazzling affair, and among all the representatives of rank and beauty, none were more observed than the lovely daughter of the house, and the reputed millionaire Henri, Comte de Fervacques.

"This is our dance, I think, Mademoiselle?" he said with a courtly bow.

She laid her hand upon his arm and they took several turns round the spacious room, then he led the way to the balcony where all sorts of luxurious lounges had been arranged in a perfect bower of roses and heliotrope.

"I cannot get rid of the idea that we have met before, Mademoiselle," he said, looking fixedly at her.

"Not that I am aware of, Monsieur le Comte, both your name and features are perfectly strange to me."

"It is not to be expected that Mademoiselle would remember *me*, but no one could ever see *her* face and forget it," he rejoined, lowering his voice to an almost caressing tone.

She flushed angrily and her eyes fell before his expressive glance, then proudly raising her head she said coldly:

"I am neglecting my duties as daughter of the house. Kindly take me back to the Duchess."

He obeyed with a smile that was not good to see, and a little later when he saw her with her *fiancé*, smiling, radiant and gracious, he turned on his heel with the unspoken resolve: "She shall recognise me yet!"

Baron Wilhelm Vanlinden was a young man of large fortune, irreproachable character and distinctly prepossessing appearance. The engagement between him and Mademoiselle de Simeuse had been long desired by the two families, and happily had proved most acceptable to the young people themselves. He had adored Thérèse from his boyhood and she now returned his affection with an ardour that few would have given her credit for.

The Comte de Fervacques soon established himself on terms of intimacy at the Hôtel Simeuse. His unlimited wealth made him a most useful friend to the extravagant old Duke, and his charming manners and graceful attentions rapidly ingratiated him with the long suffering Duchess. Thérèse alone seemed to shrink from him, and repulsed all his friendly overtures with chilling civility. She listened unmoved to all his thrilling recitals of adventure in the wilds of America or the snow-clad Steppes of Russia, and all the resources of his fertile brain had as yet been taxed in vain to awaken the slightest warmth in her manner to him. In fact the only two beings for whom she evinced any feeling were her mother and her *fiancé*.

One Monday morning about ten o'clock Henri de Fervacques received a visit from a lean, sallow-faced Irish-American, who was nominally his secretary.

"Have you found out anything?" said the Count in English as soon as the man had locked the door behind him.

"Yes, my lord," was the prompt reply. "Baron Vanlinden is a member of a secret political society, the rules of which are most strict, and they are bound by a solemn oath not to reveal their movements even to save life itself. There is to be a meeting at Mechlin on Friday evening to which Vanlinden and his friend Van Scheen are going disguised as pedlars. The password is *Pro Patria* and each member wears a little iron cross like this."

"Malone, you're a treasure," said de Fervacques taking the badge from his hand. "How did you find all this out so soon?"

"That's my secret, sir. Gentlemen's valets are often rather talkative, and besides, I've not been a member of three secret societies myself for nothing."

"Have you the names of the president and chief members?" Malone handed him a rather dirty piece of paper on which was written the needful information. The Count took it with an approving nod, and after giving Malone a handsome sum of money, dismissed him, and prepared to act upon the knowledge he had acquired.

The next evening Baron Vanlinden and his friend Van Scheen were dining together when a letter was handed to the former. He opened it, read it with evident surprise and then passed it to his companion.

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"Oh, it's only a precaution. The chief has heard something that makes him extra careful. That's all," said Van Scheen.

The note was as follows:

Leave Brussels on Thursday night instead of Friday. Go to the Hôtel du Lion, five miles this side of Mechlin, and stay there until you hear again from me. The landlord is to be trusted.

This was duly signed and sealed with the mystic token of their order, so there was nothing to do but to obey. Vanlinden felt a strange misgiving, but his friend had no scruples, and as they expected that the next meeting would be fraught with important issues there was the more need for caution and obedience.

On Tuesday it was announced that the Comte de Fervacques had left for Paris by the night train; but his valet could have told a different tale. De Fervacques left the train alone two or three stations from Brussels and made his way in a hired carriage to the Hôtel du Lion, an unfrequented wayside inn, kept by a man of bad reputation, on the outskirts of a straggling villiage near Mechlin.

Vanlinden and his friend started as directed on the Thursday night, disguised as pedlars and each wearing the badge of the order inside his vest. They walked part of the way and arrived at their destination both tired and hungry. The landlord of the Hôtel du Lion gave them the pass-word and took them up to their room, which was as dreary as such rooms generally are. There was a large fire which, while looking cheerful, brought out the damp, fusty smell of an unused apartment with imperfect ventilation, and caused the moisture to stand out on the discoloured walls. The supper was laid and the food was well cooked, so they settled down to make the best of their compulsory quarters. The wine was quite above the average, and to counteract the depressing effect of their surroundings they drank pretty freely

of it, and both fell asleep over the fire soon after supper.

At the same hour an aged priest was saying his nightly office in his oratory not many hundred yards away, when the window of the adjoining room was forced open, and a man dressed as a pedlar, wearing a mask and a curious iron cross on his breast, entered stealthily, and falling upon the kneeling figure, stabbed him in the back. His cries brought his faithful housekeeper to his aid, and she came face to face with the murderer, who, while giving her full time to observe him, flung her upon the ground, and inflicted two or three slight flesh wounds in her arm and shoulder. She fainted from fright, and the assassin departed hurriedly by the way he came in. He at once made his way to the Hôtel du Lion, was admitted by the landlord, and then crept softly up to the room where the two friends were still sleeping after the drugged wine. He drew Vanlinden's handkerchief from his pocket, wrapped the blood-stained knife in it, and placed it carefully on the person of the man he meant to ruin.

A few minutes later Henri, Comte de Fervacques, left the Hôtel du Lion, and made his way to Paris as fast as the night express could carry him.

The next day, Brussels was scandalised by news of the most startling nature. An aged priest had been brutally murdered while at his devotions, by a man dressed as a pedlar, who had been arrested at the Hôtel du Lion, with a blood-stained weapon in his pocket, and had been identified by the priest's servant, owing to a curious iron cross he wore. The supposed pedlar turned out to be no less a person than Baron Wilhelm Vanlinden, who refused to give any explanation of his presence in that neighbourhood on the night of the outrage.

Thérèse de Simeuse was at first stunned by the terrible intelligence, then she set her wits to work and obtained permission to visit her lover in the prison.

"How good of you to come, dearest!" said Vanlinden. "It shows me that you do not believe this awful accusation, though I fear things look very black against me!"

"How could I think such a thing for a moment, Wilhelm," she said fondly. "There is some horrible mistake, but it will be quite easy to prove your innocence, of course!"

"I'm not so sure about that, my dear one," he said sadly.

"Why not? What *do* you mean?" she asked with sudden alarm.

"Simply this. I am not at liberty to explain either my presence at the Hôtel du Lion or my reason for wearing this disguise."

"But you will be able to at the trial?" she persisted, as she knelt at his side and looked up piteously into his pale, strained face. "Think of what is at stake, dear, our life's happiness, your own honour and that of your family."

"Dearest, my honour is just that which demands that I should not break an oath even to save my life, and," he pursued more tenderly, "you would not have me secure our happiness by breaking my word, I am sure. I know you to well for that."

She did not answer for a moment, and the sound of her low sobs alone broke the silence of the prison-cell. At last she raised her head and said with resolute look, though her voice was still weak:

"No, *mon bien-aimé*. You could not do that. We must find some other way of saving you."

The trial was drawing near before the Comte de Fervacques returned from Paris. He had heard the terrible news, and was loud in his denunciations of the iniquity of the charge, and eloquent in his expressions of sympathy for Mademoiselle de Simeuse and her parents. He had several interviews with Vanlinden and did his utmost to persuade him to explain his movements on the night of the murder, but in vain, the young man's fortitude was impregnable, alike to the pleadings of his own heart for love and life, and to the terrors of death held over him by his counsel and friends.

"It is no use waiting for him," said De Fervacques to himself as he left the prison one day, "if he would have spoken he would have been imprisoned, if not hanged for treason, and then the marriage could never have taken place, but as he won't, it must be done the other way!" With that he went and asked for a private interview with Mademoiselle de Simeuse on a matter of vital importance.

Thérèse de Simeuse received him with her usual *hauteur*, and coldly requested to know the reason of his strange request.

"Mademoiselle, I have just come from Baron Vanlinden. He persists in this obstinate silence which, I fear, will cost him his life. Can you do nothing to induce him to clear himself?"

"Impossible, Monsieur le Comte, I could not ask the baron to act in opposition to his own judgment and sense of duty. His innocence *must* be established," she continued passionately. "There was no motive for the crime. His blameless life must tell in his favour! It can't be that the law is so blind. My father has engaged the most eminent counsel to plead his cause."

"And all that will be of no use unless he can explain his mysterious presence in that neighbourhood, or else can produce the real murderer," said De Fervacques in a tone of calm conviction.

"You are hard and cruel," she murmured.

"No, my dear mademoiselle, far from it. I am deeply grieved for your sake, if for nothing else, and I am convinced of Vanlinden's innocence;" and he added in a low tone, "*I can prove it!*"

"You? You can prove it?" she exclaimed breathlessly, starting to her feet, and coming towards him with out-stretched hands. "And you will do so? You will not let him die?"

"No, I will not let him die," he began slowly.

"Ah, may God bless you for those words, and forgive me for the ill-will I have borne you!" she interrupted, as the tears of joy forced their way into her kindling eyes.

"Yes, I will do it," he said gently, taking both her hands in his, "on one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you become my wife the day of his release, and swear never to reveal my part in the transaction."

"Never!" she cried, striving to free herself from him. "Never! my heart has not deceived me, you are base and treacherous! No, a thousand times no!"

"Then you will let him die a felon's death, rather than marry one who loves you, as his cold nature could never love. One whom no oath, however sacred, would keep silence if *you* were the prize of speech!" he pursued passionately, still holding her in his firm grasp. "Don't shrink from me, Thérèse, I love you with the passion of my life; I don't ask you to love me yet, but only to give yourself to me in return for his life."

The vehemence of his words and the singular magnetism of his presence, the helplessness of her position, and above all the fear for her lover, made her

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brain reel, and she would have fallen if he had not put his arm round her at that moment. The act restored her failing faculties; with a shudder she withdrew from his embrace, and, darting to the other side of the room, cowered on the sofa like a creature at bay. De Fervacques said no more, but kept his eyes fixed on her with an expression that at once repelled and dominated her.

"At least you will give me time to consider?" she faltered.

"You may have till to-morrow night, but if you betray me, remember, Vanlinden dies!"

He left her with a courtly bow, and entered his carriage with a triumphant smile, for he knew the game was won.

The next morning Thérèse rose pale and exhausted after a sleepless night of agonised perplexity, and, accompanied by her maid, went to see the solicitor in charge of Vanlinden's case.

"My client is in a most serious position, Mademoiselle. I cannot ignore the gravity of the case. If he persists in this course of obdurate silence it will be impossible to save his life, unless, of course, the real murderer can be found," he replied in answer to her anxious inquiries.

"Then you think that is the only chance?"

"The only one, Mademoiselle."

She left the office with a stunned, dazed feeling as if part of her were dead already, and every time she closed her aching eyes, the vision of her lover, dead at the hands of the executioner, rose before them, and his voice seemed to sound in her ears: "*You* might have saved me, if you would."

That night the Comte de Fervacques received a scented, coroneted note which ran as follows:

"MONSIEUR LE COMTE DE FERVACQUES.

"I accept your terms and pledge myself to marry you in return for Baron Vanlinden's release, providing that you will allow a month to elapse between his acquittal and the day you claim me as your wife. My feelings to you remain unaltered and unalterable, but a de Simeuse never broke her word.

"THÉRÈSE DE SIMEUSE."

"I don't like the delay," he said musingly after he had read it, "but I suppose I can trust her, and it's better not to drive her too far or she might baulk my plans by making a tragic exit from this world's stage. I must now procure the proofs of the young man's innocence," he concluded with a curl of his mobile lips.

He took a slip of closely written paper from a drawer in his writing table, and a small bottle from a curious silver casket that stood on a richly carved cabinet, and took them both to his dressing-room. There he effected a complete change in his appearance, and presently sallied forth under cover of the dusk, looking like a dirty, shabby artizan, towards the slums of the city. Here he sought out a man who had served his ends in the past, but whose craving for absi the had kept him from turning to any good account the hush-money he had received for his dirty work, and was now on his last legs both physically and financially.

A very short interview sufficed to persuade the besotted outcast to copy the confession of murder that De Fervacques placed before him, under a promise of a hundred pounds and means of escape before the police should be put on his track. As he wrote the last words with his shaky, almost illegible scrawl, the man behind him pressed a handkerchief steeped in chloroform over his mouth and nose, and when that had done its deadly work, he drew a piece of rope from his pocket and strung the unconscious form up to a hook in the ceiling and left the house posting the important document on his way home.

The cunningly contrived plot worked without a hitch. In consequeuce of "information received," Baron Vanlinden was acquitted by the authorities with many apologies on the following day. No inquiry was instituted as the supposed suicide of the self-convicted murderer. A life like his was of no account in a great city, and it must be confessed he left none to regret him.

The Duc de Simeuse, acting upon cleverly insinuated calumnies veiled with expressions of deep regret, from the Comte de Fervacques, at once announced his determination of breaking off the engagement between Baron Vanlinden and his daughter unless the mysterious conduct of the former could be satisfactorily explained to him. This was, of course, impossible, and the poor young baron left Amsterdam, en route for New York within a week of his release without having been permitted to have an interview with his former *fiancée*.

On the appointed day a most magnificent ceremony celebrated the sacrifice of Thérèse de Simeuse on the altar of Henri de Fervacques' base passions.

A couple of months later he entered her exquisitely appointed boudoir, as she sat aimlessly toying with a jewelled fan.

"Madame la Comtesse," he began with a bow that had more mockery than courtesy in it, "you said you did not remember ever having seen me before we met at the Hôtel Simeuse: let me now refresh your memory. Fifteen years ago, when you were a child of six and I was a lad at school, I saved up my pocket money to buy you a bunch of roses and give them to you as usual on your walk. I asked you to kiss me, but you clenched your little hand and pushed me away saying that 'You did not kiss *street* boys!' I was then Pierre Démar, the son of a poor country doctor, but I swore to humble you before I died, and now that your life is indissolubly linked with mine, let me tell you that you are no countess, for, in the eyes of the law, I am but Pierre Démar still!"

"You have tricked and deceived me, I shall denounce you!" she almost screamed in her rage and mortification.

"And proclaim your own shame to the world, for you and your charming father have been living on my money for nearly a year past," he said with cutting emphasis and brutality.

"But my presence need not inconvenience you," he continued calmly, "for I am sick of the tame conventionalities of European life. I am going to start for the East to-night, and you can return to your parents, or send for Vanlinden, whichever you prefer. You are nothing to me now that you have served my purpose. I leave you to enjoy your *freedom*," he said with a sneer, "on the modest income that can be saved from the results of your father's dissipation, as I feel sure the pride of a *de Simeuse* would not allow you to take anything from the hands of *Pierre Démar*."

As suddenly as he had flashed his brilliant personality upon the fashionable world of Brussels, so unexpectedly did he vanish from the scene of his remarkable triumphs, to pursue his devious course under other skies, and possibly re-appear in some of his former haunts before the curses which followed his name had died away on the trembling lips that uttered them.

MARY FERMOR.

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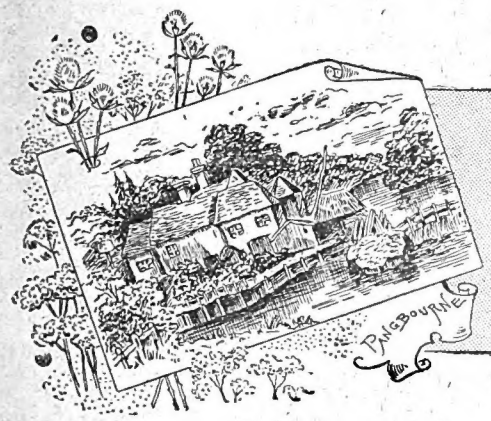

THE MUMMY'S FOOT.

FOR want of something better to do, I stepped into the shop of one of those dealers in curiosities, or dealers in *bric-à-brac*, as they are called in Parisian slang, so perfectly unintelligible to the rest of France.

No doubt you have peeped through the windows of some of these shops, since it has become the fashion to buy old furniture and the smallest stockbroker thinks he must have his room in the style of the Middle Ages.

It is somewhat like the shop of a dealer in old iron, an upholsterer's store, an alchemist's laboratory, and a painter's studio, all in one. In these mysterious dens, where a prudent twilight filters through the shutters, what is most notoriously ancient is the dust. The cobwebs there are more authentic than the guipures, and the old pear wood there is younger than the mahogany that arrived only yesterday from America.

My *bric-à-brac* dealer's shop was a real Capernaum. All the centuries and all the countries seemed to have made an appointment to meet there. A red Etruscan lamp stood upon a Boule cabinet with ebony panels severely set off by filaments of copper; a sofa of the time of Louis XV. carelessly stretched out its slender legs under a solid table of the reign of Louis XIII., with heavy convolutions of oak, with carved foliage and mythological monsters intermingled.

The ribboned cuirass of a suit of damasked Milan armour glittered in a corner; cupids and nymphs in biscuit, grotesque Chinese images, Dresden and old Sevres cups encumbered the stands and whatnots.

On the serrated shelves of dressing-tables beamed some immense Japanese dishes, in red and blue patterns heightened by hatchings of gold, side by side with some of Bernard Palissy's enamels, representing snakes, frogs, and lizards in relief.

From the overflowing cabinets escaped cascades of Chinese silk with its silvery sheen, waves of brocatel riddled with luminous specks by an oblique sunbeam; portraits of all ages smiled through their yellow varnish in more or less tarnished frames.

The proprietor was careful to follow me along the tortuous passage between the piles of furniture, restraining with his hands the dangerous sweep of my coat-tails, and watching over my elbows with the restless attention of the antiquary and the usurer.

A singular figure was that of the proprietor; his immense head, as smooth as a knee and fringed by a scanty aureola of white hair, which was set off more sharply by the light salmon colour of his skin, gave him a false air of patriarchal good-nature, corrected, however, by the glittering of his two little yellow eyes, that quivered in their orbits like two *louis-d'or* upon quicksilver. The curve of his nose had an aquiline outline that recalled the Jewish or Oriental type. His hands—lean, thin, veined, full of sinews sticking out like the strings of a violin, with nails that resemble the claws that terminate the membraneous wings of bats—moved with a sort of senile oscillation uncomfortable to look at; but these nervously twitching hands became as firm as steel pincers or lobster's claws, as soon as they took up any precious object—an onyx cup, a Venetian glass, or a Bohemian crystal plate. This old fellow had such a profoundly rabbinical and cabalistic air that he would have been burnt three centuries ago for his looks.

"Won't you buy something of me to-day, sir? Here is a Malay creese with its blade undulating like a flame; look at these grooves for draining off the blood, these teeth pointing backward for tearing out the entrails when the dagger is drawn out; it is a ferocious weapon, a fine specimen, and it would show well in your collection; this two-handed sword is very handsome; it is one of Joseph de la Hera's, and what superb work there is on it!"

"No, I have enough arms and instruments of carnage; I should like a little figure, some sort of thing that would do me for a paperweight, for I can't endure all these manufactured bronzes that the stationers sell, and that are invariably found on every desk."

The old gnome, rummaging through his ancient lumber, spread out before me antique bronzes, or what he called such, bits of malachite, little Hindoo or Chinese idols, a kind of Oriental plaything of jade, the incarnation of Brahma or Vishnu, wonderfully suited for anything but this divine employment of holding newspapers and letters in place.

I was hesitating between a porcelain dragon quite constellated with warts, with its throat garnished with fangs and bristles, and a very abominable little Mexican fetish, representing the naked god Huitzilopotchli, when I chanced to notice a charming foot that I took at first for the fragment of some antique Venus.

It had those beautiful and tawn reddish hues which give to Florentine bronze its warm and lovely look, so preferable to the verdigris colour of the common bronzes that might well be taken for statues in a state of decomposition! a satiny gloss there was over its contours, polished by the loving kisses of twenty centuries; for it

must be a Corinthian brass, a work of the best period, perhaps a cast of Lysippus.

"This foot will just do for me," said I to the shopkeeper, who looked rather ironically and slyly at me, as he handed me the desired object so that I might examine it more at my ease.

I was surprised at it's lightness. It was not a metallic foot, but a foot of real flesh—an embalmed foot, a mummy's foot. By looking at it closely, the grain of the skin could be distinguished and the almost imperceptible figuring imprinted by the woof of the bandages. The toes were small and delicate, with nails as perfect, fine and transparent as agates. The great toe went off slightly from the others, in the antique fashion, and gave it an easy look—the lightness of a bird's foot. The sole, hardly streaked by a few invisible hatchings, showed that it had never touched the ground, and had only come in contact with the finest mats of Nile reeds and the softest of panther-skin rugs.

"Ha, ha! So you want the Princess Hermonthis' foot," said the shopkeeper, with a strange sneer, fixing his owlish eyes upon me; "ha, ha, ha! for a paperweight! An original idea, the idea of an artist. Anybody telling old Pharaoh that his beloved daughter's foot was to be used for a paperweight would certainly have astonished him, when he was having a mountain of granite dug up to put in it the triple coffin painted and gilded and all covered with hieroglyphics and beautiful pictures of the judgment of souls," added the queer little man, in a low tone, and as if talking to himself.

"How much will you sell me this fragment of a a mummy for?"

"Ah, as dear as I possibly can, for it is a splendid piece. If I had its mate, you wouldn't get it for less than five hundred francs. There is nothing more rare than the daughter of a Pharoah."

"Of course, it is not common; but how much do you want for it? First, I warn you, though that all the treasure I possess amounts to just five louis. I will buy anything that cost five louis, but nothing for more than that. If you should search all my pockets and my most secret drawers, you wouldn't find another single bit of money."

"Five louis for the Princess Hermonthis' foot is very little; very little indeed, for an authentic foot," said the dealer, tossing his head and rolling up his eyes. "Well, take it, and I will give you its wapper into the bargain," he continued, winding it within an old scrap of damask; "very fine, real damask, Indian damask, that has never been dyed over; very strong and soft it is," mumured he, as he passed his fingers over the frayed fabric, a remnant of commercial habit that caused him to praise up an object that he himself thought only worth giving away.

He slipped the gold coins into a sort of mediæval alms-bag hanging at his belt, and repeated: "The Princess Hermonthis' foot to be used for a paperweight!" Then, fastening his phosphoric eyes on me, he said to me in a voice as strident as the miauling of a cat that has just swallowed a fish bone: "The old Pharaoh will not be pleased; the dear man loved his daughter."

"You speak of him as if you were his contemporary. Old as you are, you do not go quite back to the pyramids of Egypt," I answered him laughingly, from the threshold of his shop.

I went back well content with my acquisition. To avail myself of it at once, I placed the foot of the divine Princess Hermonthis upon a pile of papers—the rough draft of some verses—an undecipherable mosaic—erasures, articles begun; forgotten letters posted in the drawers, a mistake often happening to absent-minded people. The effect was charming, odd and romantic.

Quite satisfied with this adornment, I went out into the streets and walked about with the gravity and pride befitting a man who has the ineffable advantage over all the people he elbows, of possessing a piece of the Princess Hermonthis, Pharoah's daughter.

I considered everybody supremely ridiculous who did not own, like myself, a genuinely Egyptian paperweight, and it seemed to me a sensible man's true business should be to have a mummy's foot on his desk.

Fortunately, the meeting with a few friends made me think of something else besides my infatuation with my recent acquisition. I went off to dine with them, for it would have been difficult for me to dine by myself.

When I came home in the evening, my brains being somewhat stimulated, a gentle whiff of Oriental perfume delicately tickled my olfactory apparatus—the heat of the room had slightly warmed up the matron, the bitumen and the myrrh, in which the embalmers had bathed the princess's body. It was a faint perfume, though very penetrating, a perfume that four thousand years had been unable to evaporate.

The dream of Egypt was eternity. Its odours have the solidity of granite, and last as long.

Soon I was drinking full draughts from the black cup of sleep. For an hour or two everything remained opaque—oblivion and vacancy overwhelmed me with their dark waves.

However, my intellectual obscurity cleared up, and dreams began to touch me in their silent flight. The eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw my chamber just as it was in fact. I might have thought myself awake, but a vague feeling told me that I was sleeping, and that something strange was about to happen.

The odour of myrrh had increased in intensity, and I felt a slight headache, which I very reasonably attributed to a few glasses of champagne that we had drunk to the unknown gods and our future success.

I looked at my room with a feeling of expectation not in the least justifiable. The furniture was quite in its place, the lamp was lighted upon the table, subdued by the milky whiteness of its glass globe; the water-colours shone under their Bohemian glass, the curtain hung languidly, everything looked asleep and still.

But, after some moments, this quiet apartment seemed to be disturbed. The woodwork creaked furtively, the log buried under the ashes suddenly spurted a jet of bluish gas, and the discs of the oateras appeared like metallic eyes, intent, as I was, upon the things that were going to happen.

My eyes turned, by chance, towards the table where I had placed the Princess Hermonthis' foot. Instead of being motionless, as becomes an embalmed foot four thousand years old, it moved, quivered, and hopped over the papers like a frightened frog—one would have thought it in contact with voltaic pile. I heard very distinctly the hard rap made by its little heel, as hard as a gazelle's hoof.

I was rather displeased with my acquisition, prefering sedentary paperweights, and not considering it very natural for feet to walk about without legs, and I began to feel something that was much akin to fear.

Suddenly I saw the folds of one of my curtains move, and I heard a noise of somebody hopping on one foot. I must confess that I was hot and cold alternately; that I felt an unknown chill run down my back, and

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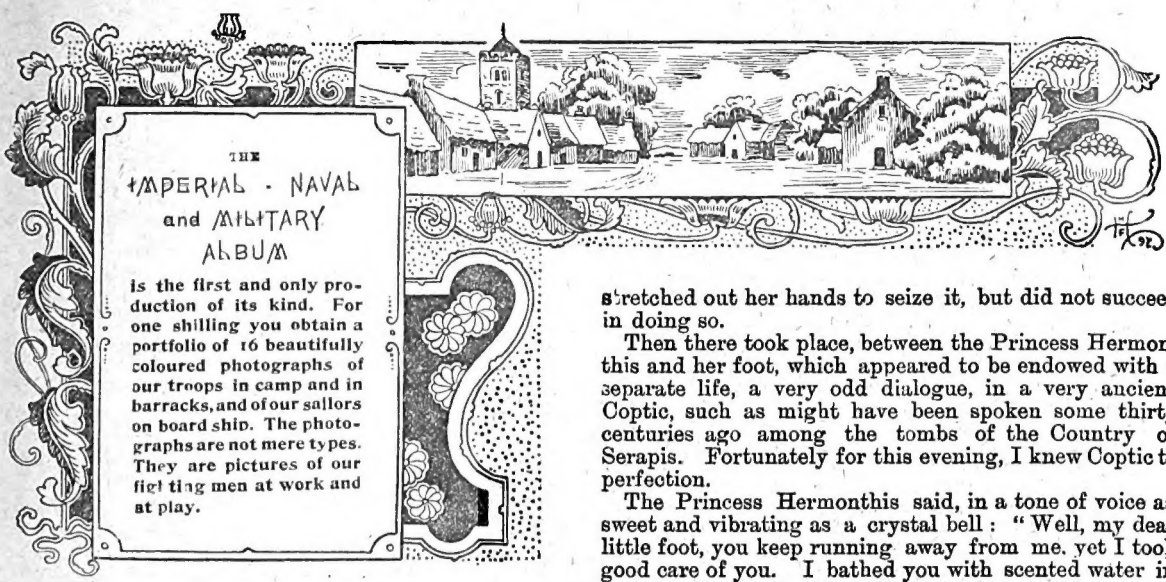
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that my hair, standing on end, made my nightcap rise up in the air.

The curtains were half opened, and I saw coming towards me the strangest figure that can be imagined. It was a young girl, very dark *café-au-lait* coloured, like the bayadere Amani, of perfect beauty and of purest Egyptian type. She had almond-shaped eyes, with corners drawn up, and eyebrows so black they looked blue; her nose was of delicate cut, almost Greek in its fineness, and she might have been taken for a bronze statue of Corinth, if the prominence of her cheekbones and the slightly African expansion of her mouth had not indicated, beyond all doubt, the hierogliphic race of the banks of the Nile.

Her slender and spindle-turned arms, like those of very young girls, were circled with some sort of metallic and glass rings. Her hair was all in plaits, and upon her breast hung an idol in green clay, whose whip with its seven lashes indicated Isis, the conductor of souls. A gold plate glittered on her forehead, and some tracery of paint peeped through her coppery cheeks.

As for her costume, it was very strange. Imagine a dress of wrappings, covered with black and red heiroglyphics, stiffened with bitumen, and apparently belonging to a freshly unswaddled mummy.

By one of those leaps in thought so frequent in dreams, I heard the crackled and hoarse voice of the *bric-à-brac* dealer, who was repeating like a monotonous refrain the sentence he had pronounced in his shop with so enigmatic an intonation: "The old Pharoah will not be pleased; the dear man loved his daughter."

There was one strange circumstance that did not much reassure me: the apparition had only one foot; the other leg was broken off at the ankle. She directed her course towards the table, where the mummy's foot was moving and jumping about with increased activity. Reaching there, she leant upon the edge, and I saw a tear come into her eyes.

Although she did not speak, I clearly discerned her meaning. She looked at her foot—for it was certainly hers—with an expression of coquettish sadness infinitely graceful; but the foot leapt and ran to and fro, as if impelled by springs of steel. Two or three times she stretched out her hands to seize it, but did not succeed in doing so.

Then there took place, between the Princess Hermonthis and her foot, which appeared to be endowed with a separate life, a very odd dialogue, in a very ancient Coptic, such as might have been spoken some thirty centuries ago among the tombs of the Country of Serapis. Fortunately for this evening, I knew Coptic to perfection.

The Princess Hermonthis said, in a tone of voice as sweet and vibrating as a crystal bell: "Well, my dear little foot, you keep running away from me. yet I took good care of you. I bathed you with scented water in an alabaster basin; I rubbed your heel with pumice stone dipped in palm-oil; your nails were cut with gold pincers and polished with hippopotamus' tooth. I was careful to choose for you painted and embroidered shoes with the points turned up, which made you the envy of all the young girls of Egypt. You had on your great toe rings representing the sacred scarabaeus; and you carried the lightest body a lazy foot could wish for."

The foot answered in a sulky and grieved tone: "You know very well that I no longer belong to myself. I have been bought and paid for. The old shopkeeper knew what he was about. He is still angry with you for having refused to marry him. It is a trick that he has played you. The Arab who broke open your coffin in the subterranean pit in the necropolis of Thebes, was sent by him. He wanted to prevent your going to the meeting of the people of the dark in the lower cities. Have you five gold pieces to redeem me?"

"Alas! no. My gems, my rings, my purses of gold and silver, all have been stolen from me," replied the Princess Hermonthis with a sigh.

"Princess," then exclaimed I, "never have I unjustly retained anybody's foot! Although you have not the five louis which it cost me, I give it back gladly. I should be in despair at making a cripple of so amiable a person as the Princess Hermonthis."

I said this speech in a sort of troubadour tone, that must have surprised the beautiful Egyptian. She cast on me a glance of gratitude, and her eyes lighted up with a bluish glitter. She grasped her foot, which this time submitted, like a woman about to put on her shoe, and adjusted it on her leg with much skill. This operation finished, she walked two or three steps in the room, as if to assure herself that she was really no longer a cripple.

"Ah, how pleased my father will be, he who was so disconsolate at my mutilation, and who, from the day of my birth, set a whole people to dig me out so deep a tomb that it might preserve me intact until that supreme day when souls must be weighed in the scales of Amenti. Come with me to my father; he will receive you well; you have restored me my foot."

I thought this proposition a matter of course. I put on a dressing-gown with great figures, which gave me a

very Pharaonic air. In haste, I incased my feet in Turkish slippers, and I told the Princess Hermonthis that I was ready to follow her.

Before starting off, Hermonthis took from her neck the little green clay figure and laid it upon the scattered papers that covered my table.

"It is only right," said she smilingly, "that I should replace your paperweight."

She held out to me her hand, which was as soft and cold as an adder's skin, and we departed. For some time we shot with the rapidity of an arrow through a fluid and greyish medium, in which outlines scarcely visible passed on the right and on the left. For a moment, we saw only water and the sky. A few minutes later, obelisks began to loom up, and massive buildings and steps, bordered by sphinxs, became visible on the horizon.

We had arrived. The Princess led me before a mountain of rose granite, in which was an opening so narrow and low that it would have been difficult to distinguish from the fissures of the stone, if two stelæ decorated with sculpture had not made it evident. Hermonthis lighted a torch and started off, walking ahead of me.

There were corridors hewn out of the living rock. The walls, covered with panels of hieroglyphics and allegorical processions, must have busied thousands of arms during thousands of years. These corridors, interminable in length, led into square chambers, in the middle of which were made shafts, which we descended by means of steps or winding stairs. These shafts brought us to other chambers, whence diverged other corridors, variegated, likewise, with hawks, coiled serpents, the tau, the crook, mystic boats, prodigious labour that no living eye was to look upon, interminable legends in granite that the dead alone had time to read in eternity.

At last we came into a hall so spacious, so enormous, so measureless, that the end of it could not be perceived. As far as the eye could reach, extended rows of monstrous columns, between which quivered livid stars of yellowish light—these shining points revealing incalculable depths.

The Princess Hermonthis still kept hold of my hand, and graciously saluted the mummies of her acquaintance. My eyes grew accustomed to this dusky twilight and began to discern objects.

I saw, seated upon their thrones, the kings of the subterranean races, tall, dried-up old men, wrinkled, of parchment hue, black with naptha and bitumen, adorned with golden head dresses, barbed with breastplates and gorgets, studded with precious stones, with eyes fixed like those of a sphinx, and with long beard whitened by the snows of the centuries. Behind them their embalmed people stood, in the stiff and constrained postures of Egyptian art, preserving eternally the attitude perscribed by the hieratic codex. Behind the people their contemporary cats, ibises, and crocodiles mewed, flapped their wings, and sneered, made more monstrous still by their swaddling bands.

All the Pharaohs were there, Cheops, Kephren, Psammatichus, Sesostris, Amenophis—all the dark lords over the pyramids and tombs. Up on a more elevated platform sat King Chronos, and Xisuthrus, who lived at the time of the flood, and Tubal Cain, who preceded him.

The beard of King Xisuthrus had grown so that it had already wound seven times around the granite table on which he leant, musing and somnolent.

Farther away, in a dusty vapour, through the mist of eternities, I could vaguely distinguish the seventy-two pre-Adamite kings, with their seventy-two nations, now forever banished.

Having allowed me to enjoy this dizzy spectacle for several minutes, the Princess Hermonthis presented me to Pharaoh her father, who nodded to me very majestically.

"I have found my foot again! I have found my foot again!" cried the Princess, clapping her little hands with all the marks of frantic joy. "This is the gentleman who gave it back to me!"

The Keme races, the Nashi races, all the black, bronzed, copper-coloured races repeated in chorus: "The Princess Hermonthis has found her foot again!"

Xisuthrus himself was moved. He raised his heavy eyelids, passed his fingers through his moustache, and cast upon me a glance burdened with the weight of centuries.

"By Oms, the dog of hell, and by Tmei, the daughter of the sun and of truth, this is a brave and worthy boy," said Pharaoh, pointing towards me with his lotus-tipped sceptre. "What do you want for your reward?"

Emboldened by that audacity belonging to dreams, in which nothing appears impossible, I asked for the hand of Hermonthis. The hand for the foot seemed to me an antithetical reward in very good taste.

Pharaoh opened his glassy eyes wide in surprise at my jest and request.

"What country do you belong to, and how old are you?"

"I'm a Frenchman, and I'm twenty-seven years old, venerable Pharaoh."

"Twenty-seven years old, and he wants to marry the Princess Hermonthis who is thirty centuries old!" cried at once all the thrones and all the circles of nations.

Hermonthis alone did not appear to find anything unreasonable in my demands.

"If you were only two thousand years old," replied the aged King, "I would very willing give you the Princess; but the disproportion is too great; and then our daughters must have husbands that last. You don't know any longer how to preserve yourselves. The last ones brought here, hardly fifteen centuries ago, are now nothing more than a pinch of ashes. Look; my flesh is as hard as basalt, my bones are bars of steel. I shall be at the last day of the world with the same body and face I had when I was alive. My daughter, Hermonthis, will last longer than a bronze statue. Then the wind will have dispersed the last speck of your dust, and Isis, who succeeded in finding the fragments of Osiris, would be troubled to bring your body together once more. See how vigorous I am still and what a grip I have," said he, shaking my hand in the English fashion and making my rings cut into my fingers.

He gave me such a squeeze that I woke up, and I saw my friend Alfred, who was tugging at my arm and shaking me to rouse me out of my sleep.

"Well, you sound sleeper, must I carry you out into the street and let off some fireworks in your ears? It is past noon. Don't you remember you promised to come and take me to see M. Aguado's Spanish pictures?"

"Dear me, I had forgotton all about it," said I while dressing. "We will go there at once. I have the tickets here on my table."

I stepped over to get it; but imagine my astonishment, when instead of the mummy's foot I had bought the day before, I saw the little green image put in its place by the Princess Hermonthis.

Seymour Laird.

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OF COURSE—
OF COURSE NOT.

THEY sat side by side on a big hearth-rug, gazing into the glowing coals. The one was a young man of perhaps twenty-eight, and the other an old dog of perhaps ten. That's not a criticism on the poverty of the English language. It simply shows how much more a dog can "get out of," or perhaps "put into," ten years than a man.

They sat there, anyway—young or old, young and old—and they gazed into the coals. And the young one blew great clouds of smoke out of a briarwood at the old one. But the old one did not mind. He was acclimatised.

It was in the cosy bachelor apartments of Neil Richards. Neil was a fellow who had succeeded, by dint of presumable study, money, and late nights, in getting through college in a commendable manner, seven years before. Since that time he had been engaged in the financial business. Not exactly as a legitimate broker, nor as a negotiator of loans, nor again as a pawnbroker, but in that pleasant line which on a business letter head, if he had owned such a thing, would have been expressed something like this: "Neil Richards, Income Spender, Pleasant Street, Easyville." Anyway, he had been travelling, intermittently, to improve himself, as the phrase goes, since the day he calmly, and with the most approved senioric gravity, tucked a sheepskin under his arm, and discarded his cap and gown.

But after his peripatetic streak, he went back again at last to his old rooms, in his favourite seat on the hearthrug, with his dog beside him and—in love. The fellows at the club had said several weeks past, as Richards would excuse himself, get up, and go out about nine o'clock of an evening: "Funny about Neil, isn't it? He leaves us every night at nine o'clock, and goes home, and they say he sits down and talks to that old dog General of his till midnight. Surely he must be in love."

And the fellows were right. Neil was hopelessly, fearfully, and miserably in love. Her name was Dorcas—Dorcas Howland, not a particularly pretty name, nor a particularly pretty girl, but a girl with such a wealth of sweetness, tact, common sense, and intelligence, that more would have made her a curiosity.

Neil had seen her at what is known as a large affair one evening, two months ago, was presented, murmured his platitudes, had a waltz, and immediately put her on a pedestal. He had seen her a few times since, once driving, when he received a bow that kept him absent-minded for a week, and on a few other occasions at the house of a friend, where he had passed some of the shortest quarter hours of his existence talking to her.

And that was as far as he had gone. It isn't exactly strange, then, is it, that when a man almost deifies a girl he has known only two months, he should like to sit down on a hearth-rug and talk to an old dog he has known for ten years? A club, brandy-and-sodas, gossip, and late hours are no solace at all, under such circumstances.

But we left them on the hearth-rug gazing into the coals. "You see, General, it's like this: I'm in love—desperately in love—and Miss Howland doesn't care a rap for me. Probably thinks I am just like the rest of them, looking for her money, when I'm really not. You understand, General, that I'm not?"

The General blinked sympathetically, and looked hard at the coals. Neil threw an arm affectionately round the dog.

"You see, I like to tell you these things, old boy, because you never say anything about them." There was silence for a few moments, while Richards meditatively pulled away at his pipe and the dog pensively thought of his puppy-hood and its loves. "She's so sweet and dainty!" at last continued Neil. "How she would brighten up a home for us, wouldn't she, General?" The dog turned his head, and looking at his master, reached one great paw over and laid it on Richard's knee. "Shake, is it, old man? Well, here goes. I thought you felt as I did. Now, General, you and I must scheme how to get her." The dog thumped his tail appreciatively on the rug, and they both went to work staring at the coals again.

And so they sat on, Neil solemnly meditative, the General silently sympathetic. It was a good hour later when Neil's pipe had burnt out, and the dog's head had drowsily fallen against his shoulder, that Richard heard

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the lift bell ring, and a moment after the upward rush of the car. Then, as the lift stopped at his landing, he heard the voice of old Barker saying: "Yes, sir, Mr. Richards is always in at nights now, sir. I am sure you will find him still up. Door to the right, sir; and do be careful sir, not to go to the left, as thems Miss Stevens' apartments, sir, and no one is allowed to disturb her, sir, till I takes her up her cup of tea, and the saucer of milk for the grey cat, sir, at half after——" but the remainder of the old man's loquacity was muffled by the sound of voices.

"Some of the boys come to drag me out on one of their infernal midnight romps, I suppose," said Richards to himself, with a discontented sigh. "They did that only three nights ago. Why can't they let a poor devil smoke his pipe in peace?"

Then as footsteps approached the door, he arose and surveyed himself in a long mirror at the end of the room. He did not look very presentable, he admitted. His hair was ruffled, his clothes were full of tobacco ashes, and he hadn't, when he sat down, even taken the trouble to don a lounging jacket, hence was in his shirt-sleeves.

"But who cares?" remarked Richard to himself. "If these stupid night hawks will come here at such an hour, they will have to take things as they find them. Suppose they will have something to drink, however." As he turned to the cabinet set in the side of the room, with his back to the door, and reached for decanters and glasses, a knock sounded, and a cheery voice shouted: "Oh, Neil,—I say, Neil,—I'm coming in."

"Come in if you must," was the reply. "Bring them all in; you are never alone. You and your gang are, without exception, the most unexcelled set of thoughtless, revelling, peace-disturbers I know of. You fellows have been at this thing for ten years," continued Neil, "you know you have, Bob" (still busy with the decanters). "Don't you ever intend giving it up? Why don't you fellows say something? This is no monologue."

By this time Richard had succeeded in extricating the troublesome decanters from the mass of bottles and glasses, and, turning round, faced the door. To his amazement, instead of the crowd of merry faces he had expected to see peering in at him, he saw only two. One was that of Bob Cutting, his chum, and the other —was that—of Dorcas Howland. The door was wide open.

She stood a little in front. Cutting was in the doorway.

The gleam from the dying coals, and the ruddy reflection from a lamp with a big red shade over in the corner, brought out every detail of her face and figure.

And Neil stood, with a decanter in each hand, coatless and dusty and speechless. The silence did not last long, however. Miss Howland smiled, bowed sweetly to Neil, and stepped into the room. "Good-evening, Mr. Richards," she said, and held out her hand. Neil managed in a dazed sort of way, to set down the decanter that was in his right hand without breaking it, and accepted the offered hand.

Bob Cutting looked on and smiled. "Too astounded to speak, Mr. Richards?" remarked the young woman. "Well, an explanation is due to you. Then you may not think me so utterly indiscreet as appearances would seem to warrant. Mr. Cutting, will you kindly try to put matters straight, and at the same time assure Mr. Richards that we are his guests? His accent, as I recollect it, is a pleasing one. 'For this is no monologue you know,'" and she smiled pleasantly at Neil.

"Yes," broke in Cutting, as Miss Howland paused; "you see, Neil, it's like this. It does look funny I admit, but I was walking home with Dorcas—er—Miss Howland, from some working girls' club she engineers, and we were chatting about picturesque bachelor apartments, or rather, I was describing some of them to her that I know the best, and I struck yours. I think I must have grown eloquent in my description, for Miss Howland insisted that she must see these famous apartments, of which, by the way, all the girls have heard. Knowing it would be all right, so far as you were concerned, I proposed we come over to-night and make you a call, though"—as he looked round the room—"I really didn't think she'd come."

Neil, during the recital, had quite recovered himself, and privately decided that if a man and a girl were willing to take the social risk he surely could meet them half-way. So he calmly placed the other decanter on a table, and turning to them, remarked: "I am very glad to see you. This is a little bit out of the ordinary, but the unexpected is quite often the pleasantest. Won't you sit down, Miss Howland? I am extremely sorry that your visit to my den couldn't have been made under more favourable circumstances, at one of my little teas, for instance. Under other than the present circumstance I should feel that an apology was due for my personal appearance. I am quite aware that I have no coat on, that my hair is untidy, and that I have a general and virulent attack of the malady bachelor-at-homeness. However, I shan't apologise."

And then the democratic Neil pulled up two big armchairs, and, having seen his guests cosily seated before the replenished fire, calmly and coatlessly resumed his place on the hearth-rug beside the General. Miss Howland looked surprised, but said nothing.

Then she reached over and patted the silky head of the dog.

He took the caress in a dignified sort of way, but nestled closer, if possible, to Richards. "What a handsome fellow," she softly said; "and how much he thinks of his master," she added to herself.

The three chatted away together about bachelor dens, people, and other generalities for some time, when suddenly Miss Howland rose and, turning to Cutting, said: "I wonder if you'd mind granting me one more favour. I wish to have a little talk with Mr. Richards alone." She paused a moment. "I know it's unconventional, but the rest of this is, also, and I know you won't take it amiss, will you?"

"Not at all," Cutting answered. "Suppose I manipulate the ivories while you have your talk. Don't feel that it must be abbreviated on my account, but when you get through, why, do as they do in the plays, ring for me, and, like the footman, I'll appear. Is it feasible?"

"Quite so, thank you," answered the girl, "it's so good of you." And, with a pipe in one hand and a tobacco jar in the other, Bob vanished through the door, and a moment later the click of billiard balls announced that he had found occupation.

The girl turned to Richards. He had risen with Cutting and had now donned a smoking jacket, in which somehow, he felt better equipped for his strange *tête-à-tête*. As his eyes sought hers she looked him frankly in the face, and simply asked:

"Mr. Richards, what do you think of me?"

Richards was silent for a moment, and then, with his eye on the dog at his feet, said:

"Shall I tell you frankly?"

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"Yes, please do," answered the girl.

He looked up. "I think you have lots of courage, are a bit injudicious, and, of course, did not come here without reasons."

She smiled. "You are frank, but don't you think it rude to assume the *rôle* of inquisitor in your first remark?"

"But you asked me, didn't you?" he gently replied.

"Yes, I suppose so," she said.

She stood absently looking down at shaggy General, sleeping peacefully on the hearthrug. Richards watched her a minute, and then, stepping forward, said softly: "Please sit down, Miss Howland, and then you can tell me as much as you wish."

A grateful look flashed into her face as she took the big chair he offered her, and sank into it a little wearily. Leaning back, she scrutinised the well-cut, thoughtful face of the man. He had taken his place beside the dog again, and as he sat staring at the coals in the flickering firelight, he seemed even handsomer than ever.

She looked at him a moment, and without moving said: "Mr. Richards, I've come here to-night on a queer mission. I wish advice. I wish to tell you something about myself, and then I want you to advise me as to what you think I ought to do. I have come to you under circumstances peculiar, to say the least, for these reasons: First, because what I have seen of you has led me to think you honest, frank, and sincere; second, because your friends assure me I am right. This has led me to believe you will be willing to overlook what might be construed as unwomanly, and, in addition, will be willing to help me in trouble. Am I right?" she hesitatingly asked.

"Yes, Miss Howland, you are," he replied, "people who know anything about you could not misinterpret your actions. Don't think circumstances affect me; but just tell me plainly what I can do for you."

"I thought you would take it so," she said in a tone of relief. "And now I'll tell you what I wish to, and pray don't regard it as a girl's whim—as a peculiar girl's whim—but simply try to assume the *rôle* of a willing listener and an impartial adviser. You see," she continued, "I have no one to go to. I am alone in the world. My parents are both dead, and I live with an elderly aunt, who is as good to me as anyone could be, but with whom I have absolutely nothing in common." The girl smiled thoughtfully. "She likes her tea and cat, her Goldsmith and Thackeray, early hours, and to be left alone. I am different. She is sixty-eight, and that's the reason, I presume. Besides, she was never married. And now, Mr. Richards, I have come to the place where I hardly know what to say. It's about my marrying. A funny thing to consult you about, isn't it? You see, ever since I was a child it has been taken for granted that when I grew up I should marry a certain individual. My parents both considered it a settled matter, my aunt the same; and, I suppose, as a child, I followed the general example. That man was Bob Cutting. We played together as children, living in adjacent houses, and virtually grew up together. I remember we used to have mock marriage ceremonies at which he and I always figured as the principals, with some other youngster as the clergyman, and we always looked forward to the time when as 'grown ups' our marriage might be made 'real.' So matters drifted along. The children's play stopped a good many years ago; but Bob has kept coming to see me just the same.

"And now—well, he wished to carry out in earnest what was begun in play. A few nights ago he asked me to be his wife."

The girl leant forward and absently smoothed the General's head, as he lay there watching the coals. Presently she said:

"Mr. Richards, then, and not till then, did I find I did not love him. But," she added, "I did not tell him so. I said only: 'We've been friends since we were children. Come to me next Monday night, and I will give you my answer.'"

For a moment she sat without speaking; then she concluded:

"Mr. Richards, you are Bob Cutting's dearest friend. He has but one friend like you. No man has—no man can have—no man wishes more. I come to you and ask you, who know him so well, what shall I do?

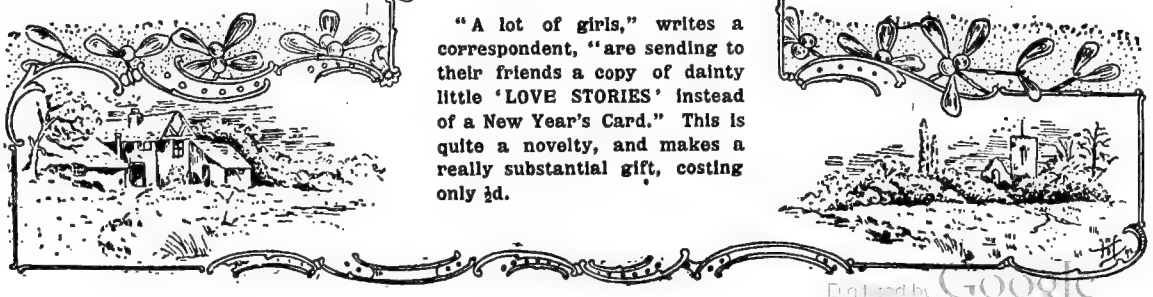
"Shall I tell him on Monday night that I'll marry him, or shall I say 'no'? Is it selfish in a girl placed as I am to think of her own future, or ought I to give it up to him? He has been good to me; so good to me; I like him, but I do not love him."

And then she leant wearily back in her chair, and fixed her eyes on Richards. He did not look up. He did not seem to realise her presence.

She watched him, and he watched the red embers glow, crumble, and fade into ashes. The dog whined in his sleep.

Then, finally, Richard raised his head, and quietly said:

"Miss Howland, I think it would be very wrong for you to marry Bob. As you say, I know him well. He is a fellow with such wealth of love for those he cares for, that if he finds it is not reciprocated he is miserable


THE CHEAPEST
NEW YEAR'S CARDS.
"A lot of girls," writes a correspondent, "are sending to their friends a copy of dainty little 'LOVE STORIES' instead of a New Year's Card." This is quite a novelty, and makes a really substantial gift, costing only ½d.

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Think what a lifetime of it would mean to him. And now, you see, in what I've said so far I've considered only Bob. I think you ought also to consider yourself. Two lives are involved; and why should they both be ruined? You are both young. If I were you I should tell Bob, in the kindest way possible, that I did not love him. He will grieve at first, but I think when he finds out you were not for him he will see that it's for the best, and afterwards thank you. And, as for yourself, Miss Howland, when you have done this you can say, 'I've done my duty; I've done right,' and some day"—the man hesitated—"and some day perhaps some other good man will come along, and ask you to marry him; and the past, with its Bob, and its trouble"—and again he hesitated—"and its visit to Richards and the General will be a ghostly vision, which happiness and sunshine will soon wipe away."

"Thank you," she said cordially. "You've been very good. You'll return my visit some time, won't you?"

Richard took her hand, and holding it for a moment, said quietly: "I thank you; I will come. But before you go, I want to ask you just one question. Don't answer it unless you wish to. You told me that you don't love Bob; is it—is it because there's someone else?"

She waited a moment, and then replied firmly:

"No; there's no one else."

A moment later Cutting joined them in response to Richards' summons. As he stood before the fire, pulling on his gloves, he looked at each other good-humouredly, and said: "I'm awfully glad that you have become better acquainted; but I hope you haven't been engaged in the pleasing occupation of condemning a mutual friend. I see you've made friends with General, also, Miss Howland," he concluded.

"Yes," she replied; "General and I are the best of friends," and she leant over and softly patted the handsome head. "And General's master and I are going to be, too, are we not, Mr. Richards?"

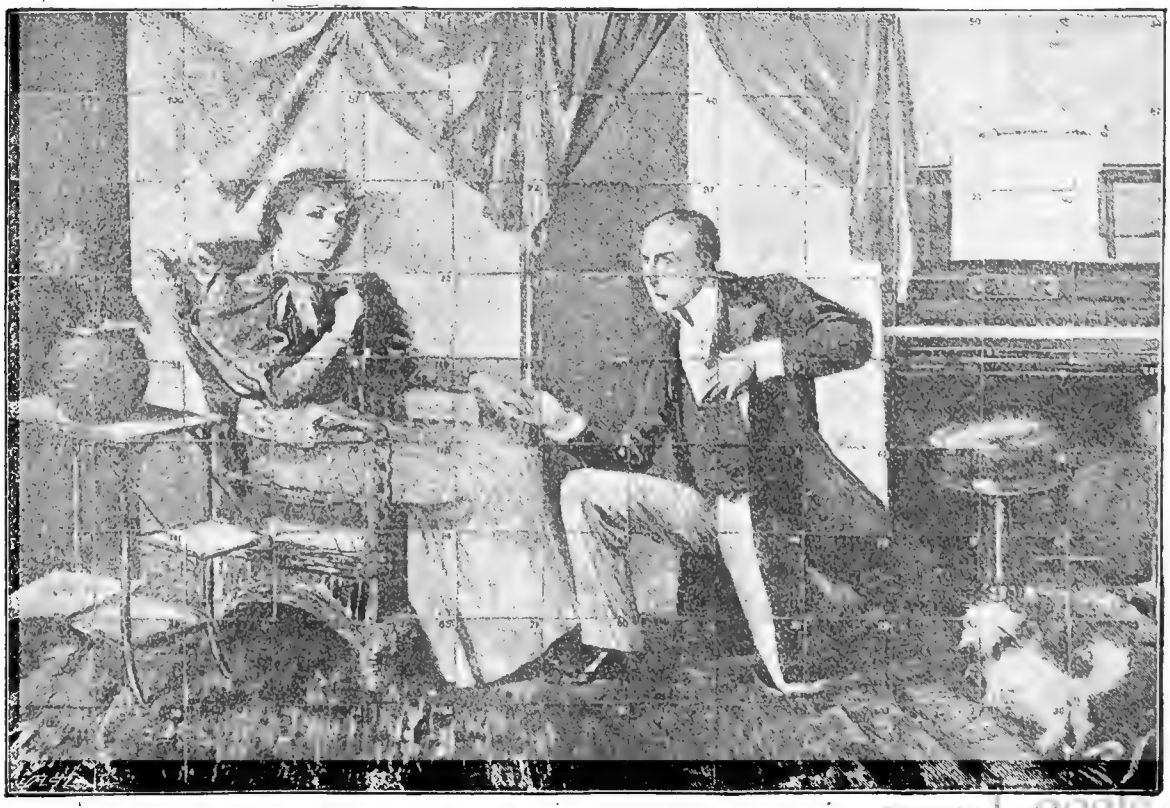
"Yes, we are going to be—that is, I hope so," Richards said slowly.

* * * * *

The next moment she was gone.

Of course it's obvious. Love does not need to be diagrammed. And, of course, a year later, when the big house had its awning, and its carpeted steps, and its music, and its flowers, all was quite as it should be. And of course their friends heard the Mendelssohn march, and threw rice, and wished them joy. And Bob Cutting was best man? Of course not. And did the Mother Grundies shrug their white shoulders, and say: "What a beautiful bride, but I wonder how she could have done it; they say she was engaged to another?" Of course they did. And that is love, and about the way it generally turns out. Of course. HARRY PECK.

Correct solution to the Picture Puzzle in **PEARSON'S WEEKLY EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER.** ***Figure-key appears on Page 25. The list of winners will be found in*** **PEARSON'S WEEKLY,** ***dated January 1st.***



BY GEORGE GRIFFITH. *Author of "Valdar the Oft-Born," "Briton or Boer?" "The Outlaws of the Air," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

HER LADYSHIP LOOKS BACK.

SHE took her hands from her ears and raised her head, half expecting to hear the banging of the guns and the continuous roar of the Nordenfeldt still shaking the air about her. But, instead, she heard nothing but the accustomed sounds of the yacht's engines, and the whistling of the surplus steam from the pipes, and the lap and swish of the waves against her sides as she drove through the water, for Lorrain had already signalled for half-speed, and was running down to join the *Independencia*.

She looked ahead to where the *Dessalines* had been, and saw only a few dark objects bobbing about in the midst of a grey swirl of water.

"Where is the other ship?" she said, looking up with wondering, frightened eyes at Lorrain. "I mean the one that you were fighting?"

"She's on her way to the bottom in two or three pieces," he replied, smiling one of his pleasantest smiles at her. "The last two shots from the dynamite guns blew up her boilers, and I suppose that broke her back. Anyhow, she went down almost immediately."

"And what about the unfortunate people on board her? Are those dark-looking things in the water yonder——?"

Lorrain nodded, and said:

"Yes, those are some of them. Niggers, and about the vilest specimens of their kind that exist. The sort of people who don't take prisoners, except to amuse themselves with in a humourous and lingering sort of way, you know."

"Ugh! I understand. Horrible! But aren't you going to save them? They can't do us any more harm now, can they?"

"Not until we'd rescued them, and fed them and set them free on land again. Then they'd take the first opportunity of returning our kindness after their own peculiar style," he replied with another laugh.

"No, your ladyship, I don't propose to rescue them any more than I would rescue a lot of drowning rats, or any other vermin. I don't belong to the Aborigines Protection Society. In fact, if the whole of that excellent body happened to be drowning with those niggers yonder, I don't think I should feel inclined to interfere with the apparent purposes of Providence. Ah, General, I was wondering what had become of you!" he went on, turning to the President, who was coming puffing up the bridge ladder.

"Ah, *mi amigo!*" he gasped as he reached the bridge, "what a wonderful vessel is this that you command so excellently, and what wonderful guns! She has the speed of a hawk and the talons of a vulture. If I had her I would sink all the ships Hayti has, then I would bombard Porte au Prince, invade this inferno of niggers by land, and in a week or two all the island would be mine."

"And in the meantime, General," laughed Lorrain, "it might be as well if we went on to San Domingo and saw how matters were getting on there, eh? I presume you intend to re-take your own capital by way of a beginning?"

"With your help, if you will give it me, Señor Don Francisco, assuredly that is the best thing to be done," he replied, holding out both his fat hands towards Lorrain. "Help me to do that, and anything that the Republic or its President can give is yours."

"We'll talk about that when we've got you settled in the palace again, General," said Lorrain good humouredly. "Of course you will understand that, although I am more than pleased to be able to do what I can in support of lawfully constituted authority, I didn't come here on a purely philanthropic expedition. However, that will do later on. Meanwhile, will you be good enough to order the *Independencia* to follow us to Santo Domingo? We had better hurry on before your friend Manuelo has time to make too much hay of the place."

As soon as the gunboat came within hail the General ordered her alongside and made a pompous little speech to those on board on the subject of the glorious victory that someone else had won for him. He then told them how he was going back to retake his capital from the rebels, or to lay it in ashes with the terrible guns which had blown the *Dessalines* out of the water. This, naturally, produced a cheer from the gallant sailors and marines and fugitive politicians, who began to feel very brave now that there was no longer an enemy to run away from.

Then the two vessels dipped their flags to each other with due decorum and ceremony, and the *Minnehaha* swung her bow round to the westward again and headed away for Santo Domingo, at twenty-five knots, followed by the *Independencia*, doing a laborious fourteen.

When Lorrain had handed her ladyship down from the bridge he told her with a meaning smile that her husband should be at once released, so that he could keep her company while he had a talk on business matters with the

General. Of course he knew perfectly well when he said this that the very last person in the world she wished to see just then was her husband, but he had his own reasons for wishing them to have a little conjugal chat together, and when he had reasons he was not accustomed to consider either the wishes or the feelings of other people.

She was, however, spared the ordeal for the present, for Sir Langton saw fit to assert his outraged dignity by declining to leave his own state-room until Lorrain had apologised to him, and his wife had come to express her regret for what he called her improper and unwifely conduct. It need hardly be added that neither had the slightest intention of doing anything of the kind.

He had sent his message to his wife in a note by her maid. When she had looked over it she sent the girl back to say there was no answer for the present, and then she walked aft, tearing the note into little pieces, and when she reached the stern she leant on the rail and dropped them over into the swirl of water that was seething up under the flying vessel's quarters.

Then she stood there looking out over the yacht's long white wake, thinking of all that had happened on that momentous morning, and wondering what was to be the outcome of it.

There could be no mistaking Lorrain's intentions now. In that moment when the brief battle was at its height, he had either purposely or involuntarily dropped the mask that he had so far worn, and he was hardly the man to do anything without deliberate intention. He had told her in so many words that he did not intend to live without her, or let her live without him. If that meant anything it meant that he loved her, and would take her by force if necessary.

But there came another thought less pleasant and even more disquieting than this one: Did he really love her and want her for herself, or did he mean to take her only so that he might gain possession of the priceless treasure that so far she had never let out of her keeping night or day?

And her husband? What was to be his fate, now that he was not only superfluous, but an obstacle which she felt Lorrain would strike from his path with as little compunction as he had left the survivors of the *Dessalines* to drown?

During the short time that the battle lasted she had learnt to know him better than she could have done in a year of quiet acquaintance. She had heard him give the orders that had carried death and destruction with them as coolly as he would have told the steward to bring another bottle of wine to the dinner-table, and he had heard the whistling of the enemy's shells about his ship with as little concern as he had listened to the cries of the sea-birds which followed the yacht.

Morally and physically he was absolutely master of the situation, and she and her husband were as completely in his power as little Arthur Pendril—who was just then sobbing with the after-terror of the fight in his berth—was in hers and his.

She had herself deliberately faced the possible necessity of putting this helpless child out of the way rather than allow him to imperil the position she had so rapidly and so skilfully won. She had got him on board the yacht with the intention that he should never return to the world of civilisation, but she shrank in terror and horror from the double crime which would make her equal in wickedness to Sybil Viney herself.

And yet if Lorrain demanded such guilty complicity from her, how was she to resist? This, then, was to be the outcome of her first crime and the successful scheming that had followed. Her tortured thoughts went back to the night when she was cowering behind the screen in the Professor's study, and she said to herself: "I would give my soul to get that thing." Now she had got it, and it seemed as though the price were about to be demanded from her.

Sir Langton did not appear at lunch. She had not heard him moving in his state-room when she went to hers to wash her hands, and when she sat down to table Lorrain, seeing her look inquiringly at his vacant chair, said quietly and almost apologetically:

"I suppose you are surprised at not seeing your husband here, Lady Pendril. I regret to say that he has seen fit to adopt such a preposterous line of conduct that I have been compelled to place him in confinement for the present."

"In confinement!" she echoed falteringly, and looking at him with undisguised fear in her eyes. "Why, what has he done?"

"I had a talk with him while you were on deck," he replied, "and he behaved in a fashion that I can only describe as ridiculous. He roundly accused me of piracy and murder, and vowed that the first opportunity he had of communicating with a British consul or man-of-war he would denounce me and have me handed over to what he calls 'justice.'

"Naturally my own protection demanded that I should, for the present at any rate, make it impossible for him to carry out such absurd threats. As you know, the business we are on is one that requires a certain amount of secrecy, and any untimely misrepresentations of that sort might ruin the whole thing. At the same time, of course, I can promise you that he shall be released as soon as it is safe for me to do so."

There was a sinister, although almost imperceptible, emphasis on the word "safe" which sent a chilly shudder through her nerves, and set her wondering for the moment whether she had already seen her husband for the last time.

"I am very sorry," she said, looking down at her plate, "very sorry indeed, but of course you are master here, and he had no right to question your actions, at least, not while he was enjoying your hospitality. Would you like me to go and have a talk with him after lunch? Perhaps I can bring him to a more reasonable frame of mind."

"You can, of course, do so if you wish, Lady Pendril," replied Lorrain, in rather a chilly tone. "Personally, I should think it would be better if he had a few hours to himself to think things over and cool down a little. To tell you the truth," he went on with an added meaning in his look and voice, "your husband appears to be even more incensed against you, whatever reason he may have for that, than he is against myself."

"Then in that case," she said, returning his glance as steadily as she could, "perhaps I had better take your advice for the present."

When they went up on deck again after lunch the opening of the harbour of Santo Domingo lay dead ahead of the yacht, and the white buildings of the ancient city of Columbus were distinctly visible on the port bow. Lorrain again invited her ladyship on to the bridge and the General also climbed the ladder after them. The yacht was slowed down to twelve knots and steamed in towards the bar. About a mile from the city Lorrain stopped her and said to the General:

"I see they've got a red flag flying over the citadel. I suppose that means that the rebels have got the town at their mercy, and if so they must be turned out. Would you prefer to open fire now, or shall we wait for the *Independencia*? She'll be over an hour coming up yet, I should think, and we can knock the citadel about their ears by that time. What do you think, General?"

"I leave it all in your hands, *amigo*," replied the President. "You are commander-in-chief here. Do as seems best to you."

"Very well," said Lorrain. "I don't believe in losing time at anything, especially fighting, so I shall begin at once. Captain Peters, just see what sort of practice you and Mr. Lennox can make at that building there with a red flag above it, and hoist a couple more Dominican flags at the mastheads so that they can see who we are. Then they'll know what we've come for. We've got to make the place too hot to hold them by nightfall."

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The exploding dynamite played frightful havoc.

"Right, seenyor!" replied the Captain, "there's mighty little difficulty about that. I reckon dynamite won't take much account of venerable ruins like that. If you'll run her in under the point there we'll be able to get a square sight at it and start the circus right away."

While the yacht was running into the desired position it became evident that her arrival, flying the flags of the lately expelled President, had created not a little excitement in the city. The ramparts and bastions facing the river and the bay mounted a few old muzzle-loading guns that were nearly as old as the century, and from the bridge of the *Minnehaha* men could be seen running to these as though to load and train them upon her.

As the range was considerably under a mile, Lorrain ordered the Nordenfeldt and two of the Maxims to play on the ramparts while the two forward dynamite guns and one of the after ones concentrated their fire on the citadel. As soon as the guns were loaded and trained, he gave the order to fire, and the beautiful, harmless looking yacht was instantly transformed into something like a floating volcano, spouting out clouds of smoke and sheets of flame, and hurling storms of projectiles on the ramparts and the citadel.

For a few minutes the ancient guns of the half-dismantled batteries replied with a fitful feebleness and shockingly bad aim, and then the fire from the city stopped entirely, for the simple but sufficient reason that those who had survived the brief storm of bullets had fled helter-skelter to the nearest places of comparative safety.

Lorrain at once ordered the machine-guns to cease firing, but the dynamite guns continued to throw shell after shell into the citadel and arsenal. The exploding dynamite played frightful havoc with the old mud and stone walls, and at last a couple of shells struck the signal tower, on which the red flag was flying, together. The force of the combined explosions sent the upper part of it flying in fragments far and wide, and when the cloud of dust and smoke had drifted away the red flag had vanished.

"I think that will do for the present," said Lorrain. "Cease fire, Captain, but keep all the guns loaded and trained, and be ready to open fire again the moment the flag goes up, if it does. Now, General, we'll wait for the *Independencia*. I think I see her smoke out yonder, and when she comes in you can send her captain ashore to demand the surrender of the town and the giving up the ring-leaders of the rebellion. If they refuse we'll just knock the place about their ears. I suppose your people ashore will have taken the hint and turned on the rebels by this time?"

"*De veredad, amigo!*" replied the General enthusiastically. "Of a certainty they will have done so or are doing so even now. You will soon hear the fighting in the streets. Your coming will give them new heart when they see how strong you are to help them, but you will not injure the town more than you can help, will you? It is somewhat ruinous in parts already, and it will cost a great deal to rebuild when we get back, and the treasury is not over full."

"That I can well believe, General," laughed Lorrain. "I don't suppose you'd be foolish enough to leave much behind you for that scoundrel Manuelo to steal. You are too good a president for that I should fancy."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY.

THE *Independencia* came bustling into the bay about an hour later, and during this interval there had been a cessation of hostilities, as though by common consent, but no messages had been exchanged between the yacht and the shore. Lorrain was far too good a tactician to risk any of his scanty crew by putting them, even for a few minutes, into the power of the rebels, and although the shore batteries had ceased to fire on the yacht, possibly in the fear of provoking further reprisals from her terrible guns, the temptation of firing on a boat might have proved too strong for the prudence of the semi-savages in possession of the city.

On shore, however, fighting was going on fast and furious. The brief, but deadly cannonade from the yacht had proved to the defeated party that the fugitive President must have returned with some mysterious, but very formidable ally, and when the *Independencia* was made out in the distance, steaming into the harbour decked, like the yacht, with Dominican colours, the correct conclusion was immediately arrived at that the *Dessalines* had been sunk, and that the available naval force was entirely on the side of the lately-fugitive President.

This particular revolution, like all others of its kind, was based on no worthy motives or deep principles involving necessary revolt against intolerable tyranny. It was simply the armed struggle of one faction with another for the spoils of office. It was, in fact, not unlike a general election in this country, saving for the fact that it was conducted with bullets instead of ballot-papers.

In such struggles there are always large numbers of combatants on both sides whose loyalty is a mere matter of expediency and opportunity. Whichever side is getting the best of it for the time being receives deserters in plenty from the other, and it often happens that on these the ultimate issue of the fight depends.

It had been thus during the night-attack which the insurgent leader had made on the city. As the President had explained to Lorrain, it was not the strength and valour of Doctor Manuelo, but the treachery and defection of his own people that had compelled him to take flight.

But now the balance was swaying the other way. A President who could take flight in the morning a beaten man, sink his pursuer out at sea and come back in the early afternoon and knock the citadel to pieces, was apparently a good man to be on the same side with, and so, when the Presidential standard was again raised by his more faithful adherents, not only did the deserters come flocking back, but some hundreds of the Doctor's officers and men came with them, and a very pretty little battle was the result.

This was about at its height when the *Independencia* steamed up the river with guns trained and men at quarters, making quite an imposing show. In obedience to orders she had received as she passed the *Minnehaha*, she dropped a boat flying a white flag as she came to a standstill off the now half-ruined citadel.

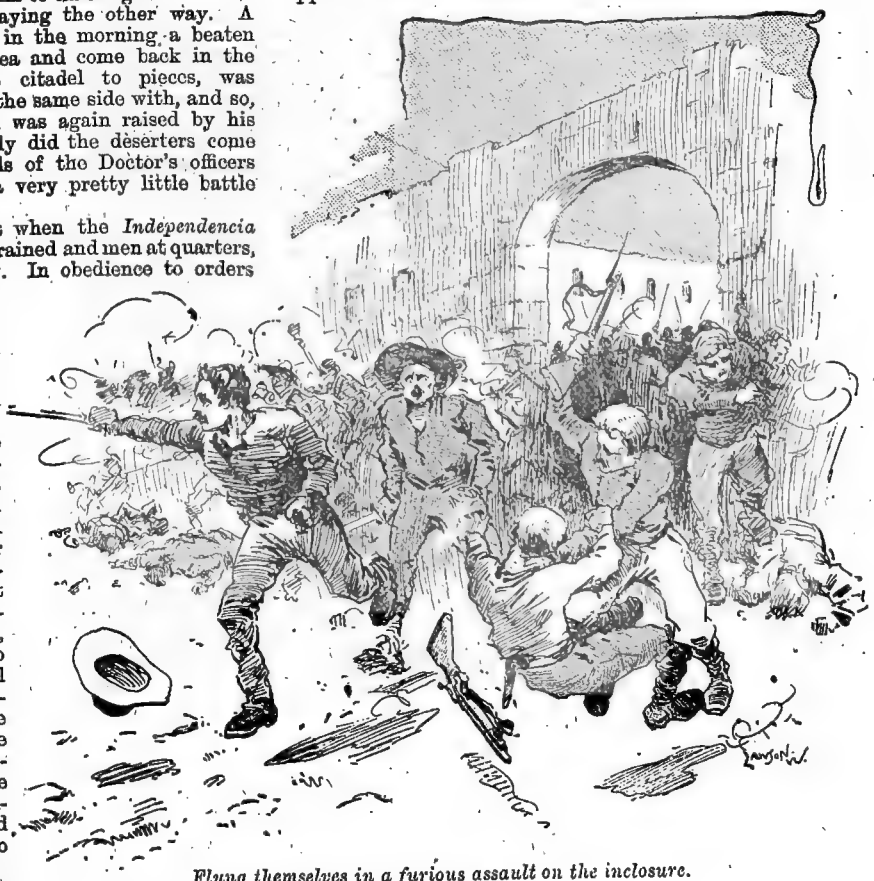
This boat carried an ultimatum from the President to Doctor Manuelo, demanding immediate cessation of hostilities and disarmament of the rebel forces under pain of bombardment. The taste that they had, had given them little appetite for more of the same kind, supplemented by the work of the eight quick-firing guns of the *Independencia*; and the dusky Doctor, under pressure amounting to threats from his principal supporters and the foreign residents in the city, threw up the sponge on condition that there should be no shootings or hangings afterwards, and that he and those leaders of the revolution who chose to do so should be permitted to retire into Haytian territory.

Whether or not this view of the situation would have commended itself to the President and his new ally it is hardly worth while to inquire, for while the boat was on its way to the *Minnehaha* the Government forces in the city, no doubt inspired by an added fervour of re-born loyalty, and a desire to atone for their earlier lapses, and possibly thinking, too, that dead revolutionists are more conveniently dealt with than living ones, took advantage of the lull in the fighting, and flung themselves in a furious assault on the inclosure in which the arsenal, citadel, and barracks stand.

This was now the last hold of the rebels, and they carried it with a rush, and settled the matter out of hand by a wholesale butchery, which ended with the suspension of Doctor Manuelo from the end of a pole thrust out of one of the lower windows of the citadel. It was not exactly in accordance with the rules of civilised warfare, but neither the state of Santo Domingo nor the world at large was any the poorer for it, and it had the advantage of simplifying matters a great deal.

Before sundown General Gregorio had landed and re-entered his capital with such pomp and circumstance of victory as the state of affairs permitted. The night was mostly spent in feasting and revelry, varied by a few summary executions and clearing up the streets, and by the following day Santo Domingo was little the worse for the revolution, save for the damage done to her antiquated fortifications and the loss of some hundreds of her citizens who had fallen victims to the coloured version of the divine rights of democracies.

The following day Her Majesty's cruiser *Magicienne* appeared off the harbour and sent a boat ashore. This



Flung themselves in a furious assault on the inclosure.

incident was not unconnected with a lively desire on the part of the British and French consuls to know more than Lorrain felt inclined to tell as to the true origin and character of the *Minnehaha*, and the result was a considerable amount of hard swearing as to the perfect legitimacy of her action under the orders of General Gregorio in support of his lawful authority. It remained, however, for Captain Hiram Peters to settle the matter by producing the yacht's American papers, running up the Stars and Stripes, and referring the British commander to the United States Foreign Office. The correspondence on the subject is probably going on still.

As soon as this little matter was disposed of, Lorrain had a long and private interview with the General in the palace on the subject of the price to be paid for the timely assistance of the *Minnehaha* and her guns, and this, after a certain amount of boggling on the part of the President, and some very firm and plain speaking from Lorrain, took the form of a concession which conferred upon him the privilege of searching without let or hindrance throughout the terri-

tory of the Dominican Republic for any precious metals, gems, or treasure, with full permission to work all deposits that he might discover, and to export whatever he might find free of duty and without examination.

In consideration of this Lorrain undertook to exert his influence in the raising of a second loan of a hundred thousand pounds to assist the President in the carrying out of certain developments of the natural resources of the country which, by a curious coincidence, were mostly comprised within the limits of his own estates.

When this important document had been duly sealed, signed, and delivered with a dispatch wholly foreign to the official and commercial traditions of the Republic, Lorrain took it back with him on board the yacht, which was lying off the town with her guns still mounted and loaded. He found her ladyship on deck amusing herself with the boy, to whom she appeared suddenly to have taken a strange and, indeed, unaccountable fancy, which seemed in singular contrast to the sinister designs which had taken her to St. Thomas.

"You appear to be getting great friends," he said, as he came beside her chair under the awning. "It is a pity that your interests are somewhat conflicting."

She coloured slightly as she looked up at him and said:

"Yes, it seems odd, doesn't it? but he is really a very nice little fellow, in spite of his—well—extraordinary origin. I really don't see why we shouldn't try and make things pleasant for the poor little fellow while—while——"

"Well, while he's with us. Suppose we put it that way," said Lorrain, with a smile. "Of course the poor little chap will be lonely, but still we've given him a pretty interesting time so far; haven't we, young man?"

The boy—who was a slim, active, gracefully-built little fellow, with a handsome but not altogether agreeable face—looked up at him and said quite collectedly:

"Yes; it was great fun, and I like you and Lady Jessica very much for bringing me to see it. When are you going to have some more fighting and shoot the cannons off again? I shan't be frightened next time."

"Well, you seem to have got over your fright pretty quickly," laughed Lorrain, "and I think I could make a man of you if I had the bringing up of you. How would you like him for an adopted son, Lady Pendril?"

Her ladyship stared at him for a moment in silence, then she beckoned to the boy's nurse and told her to take him away for the present. When the boy had gone she said rather coldly:

"What do you mean, Señor Lorrain?"

"Just what I said," he laughed, "and that after all wasn't very much. But really you know you looked so nice—I mean, of course, the two of you made such a pretty picture—as I came along the deck, that somehow the idea came naturally into my mind. He seems a nice little fellow, and it would be a pity if anything had to happen to him."

"I think we won't talk about that, please!" she said a trifle sharply. "Sufficient unto the day is the—well—the wickedness thereof. And talking of that," she went on after a moment's hesitation, "may I ask what you have done with my husband? I've somehow got an idea that he is no longer on board the ship."

"You are perfectly right, Lady Pendril," he said, pulling a deck chair up beside hers, and letting himself drop gracefully into it. "The fact is, that until Sir Langton comes to a much more reasonable frame of mind, he is capable of interfering so very seriously with our plans that it will be absolutely necessary to keep him in confinement, either until he can manage to take a more sensible view of the situation or till we have accomplished what we wish to do.

"For instance, suppose he had managed by any means to communicate with the lieutenant of the *Magicienne* when he was on board examining our papers, what do you suppose he would have thought of an English baronet being kept in durance vile on board a private yacht, that had just sunk a warship and bombarded a city? Why, in half-an-hour we should have been under the *Magicienne's* guns, and probably the whole lot of us would have been under arrest, pending a visit to Kingston and an inquiry which might have had the most unpleasant result for us.

"Well, now, I felt almost certain that either the *Magicienne*, or some other cruiser, would put in here as soon as rumours about yesterday's doing got about, and as I don't believe in taking any chances, I took the liberty of sending your husband ashore last night and handing him over to my friend Gregorio. You needn't disquiet yourself in the slightest about him. He is perfectly safe and unable to do any harm either to himself or to anyone else."

"You—you have not—I mean, nothing has happened to him, I hope!" she faltered. "Of course, he is being well treated, and is comfortable as well as what you call safe. I cannot consent to any violence or ill-treatment, you know. Surely I have been wicked enough already in all conscience, without consenting to any more crimes, and you must remember that he is my husband after all, even if he has behaved absurdly and put himself in the way."

"My dear Lady Pendril," he replied with the most ceremonious politeness, "I can assure you that you need not have the slightest anxiety on your husband's behalf. As I have told you, he is perfectly safe, and I can assure you once more that the very best possible care will be taken of him. But now I will ask you to grant me your confidence in that matter, to leave it absolutely to me, believing that I shall do the best I can for everyone; and then, for the present, dismiss it from your mind, for I have come to talk to you about something else of great importance."

"Very well," she said in a somewhat steadier tone; for in spite of the obvious double meaning of his words she knew it would be hopeless to attempt to make him speak more plainly. She knew, too, that for the present, at least, Lorrain's power over her was practically as absolute as it was over her husband, what ever had become of him, and that nothing could be gained by showing weakness. "I know," she went on, "that you are master of the situation, and I, for one, am perfectly prepared to trust to your generosity. Now what is it? Anything about the treasure?"

"Yes," he said, unfolding the paper which he was carrying in his hand, "yes, it is about that. Here is an authority from the Government which we have just put on its feet again, giving us all the rights and powers we want to go and hunt up Don Christobal's treasure-chest and bring it away with us if we can find it. It grants us several other things as well, but that is the most important just now. I have made all my arrangements on shore for a start. I propose, if things remain quiet, as I expect they will, that we shall make up a sort of picnic up the river to-morrow—a little prospecting party, in fact—just to see if the chest is where it is supposed to be, and to locate it exactly. That, of course, we cannot do without your assistance. And now, Lady Jessica," he went on in a lower and softer tone, laying his hand with almost imperceptible gentleness over hers as it lay on the arm of her chair, "I have curbed my natural curiosity about this wonderful Gold Magnet of yours until now—that is to say to the very eve of the expedition which depends for success entirely upon its powers—do you not think I have been patient enough? Marvellous as what you have told me about it is, I have taken your word for it with absolute confidence. I have never even asked you to show it to me. May I not see it now?"

As he said this his hand closed with a gentle, caressing pressure over hers, which said a thousand times more than his words. She shivered a little in the hot, breathless, afternoon air, and, drawing her hand away from his, she got up almost wearily, and said with a not very successful attempt at a smile:

"Well, yes. I don't see why you shouldn't. After all, it would not be very much use to me without your help. If you will come down into the cabin I will show it to you."

(To be continued.)

TOM HENDERSON, THE MINER.

TOM HENDERSON sat alone in his rough cabin, buried in deep thought.

His elbows rested upon a board which covered the top of a barrel. Ever and anon he would stroke, or rather pull, the long, pointed beard which ornamented his chin. Then he would tap his forehead as though endeavouring to recall some scene of the long ago.

"I wish it would hurry up and get daylight; so that I could have another good look at the face that's here in this trinket," and he lifted a small gold locket from his improvised table.

"I know I have seen those features before," he muttered, "but where, I cannot tell. If my candles hadn't all burnt out I could be gazing at the picture now, but it won't be long to wait, because I can see a few rays of light stealing through the chinks of the wall.

"Funny that I should have picked up this thing on the mountain trail. Some poor pilgrim must have dropped it, 'cause I'll swear that none of the old men in camp ever 'toted' it about with them. I've seen some one that it puts me in mind of, but who, when, and where I've run acrost 'em, I don't know.

"Oh, pshaw!" continued the miner. "I don't see why I should be bothering my head about the matter. If it is the picture of some one I've seen in my younger days, it matters nothing to me, for hasn't Tom Henderson been dead to the world for many years?"

The lonely tenant of the cabin, however, could not shake off the fascination which the likeness seemed to possess for him, and again lifted the locket from the table. This time he turned it so that the feeble beam of morning which penetrated a small hole in the wall would fall directly upon it.

"It looks almost the same as my Margaret did when we were married. But it can't be her picture, for we never had anything of this kind in our house," he repeated. "Oh, there was a home!" and the voice of the miner choked with emotion as he recalled the scene.

"Home, wife, and daughter swept away in one night by the angry waters of the Missouri! Ah, well, it was the will of Providence! and I submit to the chastisement!"

With this remark Tom Henderson placed the trinket which had so much interested him in his pocket, and proceeded to start a fire in an old broken stove that he might cook a little breakfast before going down into the gulch to begin his day's labour.

The old rusty coffee-pot was steaming, and the salt pork was sizzling in the frying-pan when the door of the cabin was burst open, and a young man, perhaps twenty-five years old, fell prostrate upon the floor.

"Halloa! Halloa! What is this? Somebody in distress and hurt, too! There's blood all over him. Say, stranger, what is it? What's happened to ye? Who's been doing you up in this shape? Hey? Can't ye answer?"

A groan from the lips of the wounded man was the only response.

"You're hurt bad," observed the miner, bending over the form of his unannounced guest. "Hit hard, I should say you was! Why, somebody's been carving you up as though you was nothing more nor less'n a dead bullock.

"Tom!" continued the miner to himself, "I reckon you've got work enough right here in the cabin to-day without going down to the washings. This chap needs patching up mighty quick or else all the life that's in him will run out through the holes that some wicked cuss has made.

"Say, friend, ye speak, and let a poor 'pill-garlic' know who you are and how ye came to be in this shape? Wake up, man. You're in Tom Henderson's cabin, and there ain't a 'galoot' east nor west of the Sierras that would dare to trouble ye while you're in his keeping."

"Margaret, Margaret! Save her!" gasped the sufferer.

"Save Margaret!" exclaimed Tom. "Would to Heaven that I could have saved her years ago when she was calling to me for help from the cruel river. But who is your Margaret, stranger? Who is it, bearing that name, that needs a friend? Old Tom Henderson would lay down his life to help any woman who possesses that name."

"They have taken her somewhere. Torn her from my side and left me for dead." As though the exertion of speaking was more than the wounded man could bear he relapses into unconsciousness.

Tom made no attempt to recall the young man to his senses, for, as he muttered to himself: "The lad is not going to go under right away, I opinion, and he won't feel me patching him up half as much if I let him lay asleep."

Despite the rough manner of the miner, no woman's hand could more gently have dressed the wounds of the poor unfortunate than did he. Tenderly Tom lifted his guest and laid him on his own hard couch, and then he turned to partake of his breakfast, the preparation of which had been so unexpectedly broken in upon.

As he sipped the pot of strong coffee, Henderson soliloquised: "I wouldn't be afraid to gamble my pile that Jim Darnley has had a hand in this affair. I know that he with some of his crew are back again in these parts. Now, if I find that it is that villain's work there be considerable excitement in this camp, and old Judge Lynch will be master of ceremonies!

"Eh? what did you say?" asked Tom, as a moan from his patient attracted his attention.

"Where have you taken her? Give her back to me,

or I will tear your heart out!" Thus exclaiming, the wounded man sprang to his feet, and clutched Tom fiercely by the throat.

"Hold on, hold on, stranger. You never was put up right to pull me to pieces, even in your best days, so how can ye expect to stand much show when you haven't more'n an ounce of strength. Take it easy, take it easy, and tell me what it is about this Margaret. I'm your friend, and will do all I can to help you and her too."

The stranger sank back upon the bed, but sat with glaring eyes riveted upon Tom. At length, as reason began to return, he murmured:

"Oh, yes; I remember all, now. The stage was stopped, a short fight ensued, I was struck down, and I saw my wife borne away in the grasp of one of the burly ruffians."

"What did you say?" exclaimed Tom. "'Stage held up!' It's funny I didn't hear anything about it. But then, how could I? I haven't been down to the hotel for a week. But how did you happen to tumble in here? The stage don't come within a mile of this place, it drives down through the canyon."

"I tried to follow in pursuit of the robbers who were bearing away my bride. Although it was dark, I noticed that they ascended the mountain. I crawled on after them, climbing higher and higher until I fell exhausted across your threshold."

"It's mighty funny how I happened to miss ye."

"Miss me?" feebly asked the wounded man. "What do you mean?"

"Mean? I mean that I climbed the trail after dark last night, and I didn't see anybody, but I picked up a mighty handsome picture. Maybe it belongs to some of the folks in the stage. Did you ever see it before?" and Tom Henderson drew the locket, which had interested him so much, from his pocket and handed it towards his companion.

"Why, it belongs to me, and that is the likeness of my wife."

"Say, young man," returned Tom, bending a look upon the stranger that was almost fierce in its intensity. "Is that the picture of your wife?"

"Yes, yes, it is."

"Then tell me what was her name before the parson made you two one."

"Margaret Henderson."

"And how old might she be, stranger?" The voice of the miner trembled as he asked the question.

"Scarcely nineteen."

"And was the young girl's father or mother alive when you married?"

"No, she was an orphan. Her parents were drowned during a flood along the banks of the Missouri, when my Margaret was but a child. She was rescued. Was found, so it was stated, floating on a piece of timber."

"Great Heaven! Is it possible!" exclaimed Henderson, excitedly. "Stranger, you stay here. Don't leave the cabin until I return."

"Where are you going?"

"To wrest from the clutches of that villain Darnley your Margaret, *my* Margaret, your wife, my daughter," and the infuriated miner rushed forth from the cabin, leaving his guest spellbound with astonishment.

About the hotel of Wagle's Pass were loitering the usual number of miners, gamblers, and chronic loafers.

The were absorbed in the interesting account of the robbery of the stage coach the night before, which was being retailed to them by a heavy-whiskered, beetling-browed individual, who claimed to be one of the victimised passengers.

"Whoever did the job, did it in good shape," remarked the narrator. "There were only three of them, but they called 'hands up' before any man of us could pull a gun. So you see, although I hate to cave in and shell out my dust without making a fight, I had to weaken, or else go under."

"But who was it held ye up?" asked one of the bystanders.

"That's what I'd like to know," was the reply.

"Then if you'd like to know who stopped that stage last night, I'll tell you!" It was Tom Henderson that spoke.

"Yes, boys, I'll tell you who it was. It was Jim Darnley, and there he stands! Up hands, Jim! I've got you covered!"

If the desperado had made an attempt to have drawn a weapon, he would have been a dead man in a moment, for the miner had thrust the muzzle of a revolver to within a foot of his temple.

"Yes, Jim Darnley! You and your gang held up that coach, and, what's more, not being satisfied with just robbing the passengers, you carried off a young woman to your den in the mountains. Now, mates, that woman is my daughter, and I'm here to compel this wretch to release her, and then see that he is made to pay the penalty of his many crimes."

"Darnley!" continued Henderson, again addressing the robber, "your hours of life are few, and the moments are speeding rapidly by. Unbuckle that belt of weapons about your waist, and let them drop. Then right about face and lead us to where you have confined your captive."

With an oath the bandit obeyed, for he saw no particle of sympathy in the stern faces of the men by whom he was surrounded.

"As I said a minute ago," remarked Darnley, "that when a man has got a gun pointed at you, you'd better come pretty near doing what he tells you to, so, you old 'cradle-rocker,' I obey orders. Come on, I'll turn the young woman over to you in short order, but I'll tell you on the 'straight,' that I wouldn't have bothered with her at all if I hadn't thought by her looks she had some rich folks in the East who'd be willing to come down handsome to get her out of my clutches."

The procession which wended its way up the mountain grew larger and larger, swelling its numbers by reinforcements from the miners, who dropped pick, pan, and spade to witness the release of their comrade's daughter and assist in the punishment which they felt sure would be meted out to the robber chieftain.

They climbed a steep trail nearly to the crest of one of the mountain-spurs, when Darnley halted and said:

"Within five hundred yards of here I have half-a-dozen men well-armed, who won't hesitate to shoot if they see me in this company. Now, if some of you fellows don't want to lay down to rest with an ounce or two of lead in your bodies you'd better let me go on ahead and arrange for your reception."

A derisive laugh followed this suggestion, but it was quickly checked by Henderson, who said:

"Mates, Jim is right! He and I will go on alone."

"Do you mean it, man?" asked the robber, looking with astonishment at the miner.

"Certainly, otherwise I should not have said so. But, mind you, Darnley, upon your treatment of me and my child depends your life and those of your band. Act square for once, and you may be allowed a chance to repent."

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"All right, old man," answered Darnley; "I know I've got a pretty bad record among you fellows, but seeing that you are willing to trust me, you can depend upon it I'll act square! Have no fear, boys," he continued, addressing the miners: "your friend will come back inside of half an hour, none the worse for having travelled a quarter of a mile in the company of Jim Darnley, the road-agent."

Without hesitation, Tom Henderson followed the robber chief up the trail, leaving the group of miners wrapped in astonishment at his temerity. Nor had their wonder ceased when they heard him returning, and as he rounded a bend in the narrow path, they were elated to see that their bold companion was leading a young woman by the hand.

"Mates," began Tom, "this is my daughter, but she didn't expect to find a father up here in the mountains. I'll tell it all to you later on, if you'll come down to the cabin, for there is a person there the 'little one' is most anxious to see."

"Where is Darnley and his gang?" asked one of the group.

"They are making tracks down the other side of the mountain, and if they keep on going at the rate I saw them start, they'll be a great many miles away from here by sundown."

"What! Did you let 'em off?"

"That's just it, my friend," answered Tom. "They deserved hanging, every one of 'em, but it wasn't for us to place nooses round their necks. Two wrongs never make a right. Come to the cabin later on, and we will talk it all over." So saying the sturdy miner led his daughter away to place her in the arms of her wounded husband.

* * * * *

It was a joyful day in Tom Henderson's rough cabin. Joyful, yet that joy was mingled with sorrow, for the father, looking upon his children, could not help recalling the days when he was blessed with the presence of a true and noble wife, and master of a cosy, comfortable home.

"It is kind of strange," remarked Margaret, "that you should have picked up that locket."

"Yes, but not so strange as it is that we should meet in this way. What causes your trip here to the mines?"

"Nothing, but recreation, a journey for pleasure—but I am afraid that the rough experience through which we have passed will cause us to return home as soon as possible. And when we do, sir," went on the young husband, grasping the hand of the miner, "you must accompany us. I am possessed of sufficient of this world's goods to place us all beyond want."

"I, too, have been fairly prosperous," replied Tom. "I have stored away beneath that hearth-stone gold enough to make us all rich, but God knows when I was gathering it I never supposed that I should have the pleasure of sharing it with my daughter Margaret."

MARLTON DOWNING.

A HEARTLESS LITTLE MAID.

"Beware, young man, she is fooling thee;
Beware, O, take care."

"No, I can never marry a man who smokes. The smell is so horrid; and, besides, I must be first in my husband's affections. I must have no rivals in the shape of dirty old pipes and ragged tobacco pouches."

"You shall have no rivals, Miss Fortesque. You can have none. You are more perfect than any pipe. Not even the little one I bought last year is for a moment to be compared——"

"No, I suppose not," she broke in, laughing mischievously; "at least, you say so now. But old sweethearts are dangerous, and men have returned to their old loves before now," and the blue eyes glanced merrily, and the little feet tapped the floor. I grew desperate.

"I will sacrifice anything you wish. I will, indeed. I will never smoke again. I will burn everything."

"Even the little pipe you bought last year?" she said, with a provoking smile.

I could have kissed or killed her at that moment.

"Even the little pipe I bought last year," I echoed sadly, and I think there must have been a tear in my eye. "I will place myself beyond the reach of all temptation. And then?"

"Then we will begin to think about it," she retorted, jumping up and moving towards the door.

"Think about it?" I said. "Do you realise what I am going to sacrifice? Can you promise no more?"

"I am afraid not. You see, I must prove you first. The spirit is often willing, but the flesh is weak."

"I will be strong," I cried; "and I may hope?"

"All men may hope. But you will be well watched, and one cigarette will shatter all your hopes. The house will now adjourn until the end of March, when we will reopen the debate. Good-bye; don't forget the little pipe," and she danced out of the room, turning round at the door to give me a mocking little bow and a smile that left me a raving maniac.

Slowly and sadly I went home and climbed up the stairs to my sanctum. I sat down in a comfortable chair and thought. There was a pipe on the table by my side; it was the little one she was so jealous of. The firelight fell on its glowing bowl, and I believe it winked at me. I took it up tenderly and stroked it. My eye wandered to the tobacco-jar. I reached out my hand and took the lid off. I filled the pipe, looking like a guilty thing. Then I went to the door and locked it and drew the curtains close over my window. I took a match and struck it, but I hesitated, and the match burnt my fingers and fell on the floor. I lit another, but again the voice of conscience whispered to me, and again I burnt my fingers! Then I swore loudly and hurled the pipe into a corner, and sent the match-box and tobacco jar after it.

My heart swelled with pride: I had conquered. A vast range of possibilities opened up before me. What

might I do in the future with such a will of iron? I grew reckless, and began to revel in my new strength.

I rose and took a newspaper which I spread out on the table. Then I laid a box of cigars on it and two boxes of cigarettes; on the top of these one or two cigarette holders, and a dozen pipes of different sorts and sizes. After that I fetched the pipe from the corner and laid it reverently on the summit of the heap, "a sorrow's crown of sorrow"; over them all I softly poured the fragrant tobacco from my jar, and began to collect my pouches.

"They will smell," I murmured to myself; "but the sacrifice must be made complete."

Then I unlocked the door and drew back all the curtains and pulled up all the blinds. I was not going to hide my light under a bushel. I put myself in the direction of the fireplace, laid hold of the paper by its four corners, and shut my eyes. In a minute all would be over. I moved towards the fireplace, but, as I did so, a thought struck me, and I hesitated.

"Am I doing right? It will be a sinful waste. I will give all away to the poor. And then, ought not I to keep some of the things? That pouch my aunt worked for me? That pipe my brother gave me? The presents from various members of the family? No, it would hardly be quite right."

I hesitated and was lost.

There came a knock at the door, and Willoughby entered.

Willoughby is a great friend of mine—so far as any non-smoker can be a smoker's friend. I would not let him be a witness of my defeat. I put the newspaper and its contents hastily down on the table.

"What on earth are you doing, Johnson?" he cried.

"Oh, I'm just—just clearing up," I said, with an attempt at a smile. "The room gets in such an awful muddle, you know."

"Your tobacco looks as if you kept it on the floor," he said, flinging himself into a chair. "But I have something to talk to you about. We have always been great friends, but hitherto there has been one bar to the perfect communion of our souls. You smoke, I do not. At last that bar is going to be removed."

A cold sweat gathered on my forehead. He had guessed my intentions, or had Lil told him? She could not have been so mean as to publicly crow over her conquest! I feebly answered "Yes," with a mixture of assent and interrogation in my tone.

"Yes, old man," he said, rising and grasping my hand; "there is now nothing between us. I am going to—to smoke."

I looked at him in silent astonishment.

"Yes, old man, smoke. Why do you look so concerned? It is not very bad, is it?—I mean the beginning?"

I saw his enthusiasm die away as the reality rose before him.

"Oh, no!"

I replied in a tone that suggested a few survivors of the ordeal.

"You don't seem very glad," he said; "but I am going to let you teach me. What shall I start on? Quick, tell me. My courage is screwed up to the point. I can't wait a moment."

The fiend of malice entered my soul. If I were to suffer by seeing him smoke, and knowing that I must deny myself even a cigarette, he should suffer, too. I have some peculiarly rank cigars that I keep for my enemies. I gave him one.

He lit it, and pulled at it vigorously, talking the while to keep his courage up.

"Why don't you smoke, old man?" he said jovially. "I thought you could never resist the smell. Come, light up."

"I am going to give it up for a time—Lent, you know. Must give up something. Doctor's orders, too. Bad for the heart. Waste of money. Think of so many poor people who want for bread."

"What?" he cried; and he began to jeer at my infidelity.

I reviled him under my breath; but as he grew paler and ceased to chatter, I thought I was revenged, and even began to pity him.

At last he let the cigar out, and grew very thoughtful. I poured him out something to drink, and we both imbibed steadily for two hours. I, to drown sorrow and regret, and he to keep himself alive.

Then we both grew more cheery and communicative. He told me he thought he would never repeat such an experience, but did not see how to avoid it. Fact was, he said, he had promised some one—had promised a lady—to smoke. She had said she would not marry a man unless he smoked. Besides, smoking destroyed germs.

Confidence begets confidence, and told I him my story with tears in my eyes.

"I cannot do it," I cried.

"I don't think I can, either," he moaned. "But I must, or she will not marry me. How I wish we could exchange! You are in luck. What an excellent wife yours will make you! So considerate of your health, so thoughtful for the poor!"

"You are in luck indeed. She must be a sweet girl. So sensible. She's quite right about germs. Exchange is no robbery. Let's exchange. We will introduce each other. The rest will be only a question of time."

"It's a bargain!"

"I have perfect faith in your taste, but who is she?"

"I think you have met her. Lilian Fortescue. What on earth's the matter?"

I had sworn a loud oath at the mention of the name, and crushed a cigarette box to pieces with my fist.

"What's the matter," I cried. "Why, you fool, there's no need for any exchange. We have both been fooled by the same girl."

For a few minutes neither of us spoke, but Willoughby hurled a fresh cigar I had given him into the grate, and my hand slowly stole towards the little pipe I bought last year. It was still filled. I lit it, and after a few puffs, burst into laughter.

"Little fiend!" I cried. "She said the smell was so horrid, and she would have no rival in a dirty old pipe."

"She said it was so good for a man," he continued; "kept him quiet and out of mischief and always made him sociable."

"I suppose she wanted neither of us, and set us impossible tasks to win her."

Next morning we concocted the following note, and sent it round to her:

Dear Miss Fortescue,—We, the undersigned, finding it impossible to fulfil the tasks you have set us, have agreed to undertake one another's burdens, and so accomplish all that you desire.

Your obedient slaves,

JOHN WILLOUGHBY.
WILLIAM JOHNSON.
HAROLD DOMBY.

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By WINIFRED GRAHAM.

Author of "Through the Valley," "A Slave of Routine," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV.

Married.

Mrs. Aladros was reading a novel. She did not look up as her husband entered.

"Well, Meresia," he said, "got through the great work?" She laid down the book, and turned to Alfonso.

"It is really very clever," she said; "I don't wonder it has made a sensation. There is so much quiet force and vigour in the writing. You did not know you were harbouring a genius. I suppose Mr. Serano will make a fortune out of this humble looking volume."

She pointed to the dull green cover, lacking any sign of ornamentation.

"He has made plenty of money already through his pen, but he never told me. I suppose he's the sort of beggar that can put his hand to anything, and have the wit to do it well. The strange thing is, he has no literary ambition whatever. To make a name as a writer holds no attraction for him. He is crazy about doctoring people, and his book shows remarkable knowledge of medical science. It appears he has studied, and now is starting a practice in town. He is a great loss to me. As a secretary I had absolutely no fault to find with him. But one can't expect a fellow with Serano's brains to stick long at that sort of work."

"No, and now he is bound to set on. His lucky star is in the ascendant!" said Meresia. "Nothing succeeds like success. I am very glad, for his past was a sad one. Bertie told me only the other day how bravely he bore his loss of fortune, and what a trial it was to him going back to his humble home and forgotten parents. He hated that year in Madrid. The monotony of a gaoler's life—to a man of his spirit, with artistic feeling—must have been purgatory."

"So Haydon knew Serano before?"

"Yes, they are old schoolfellows; he and Bertie were at Eton together."

"What does Haydon think of him? Has he read the book?"

"Rather!" replied Meresia. "Bertie is most enthusiastic about the new lion! He says that even as a boy Mr. Serano had that quickness and resolve which so often enables him to carry through an enterprise that no one else would attempt; yet hurry is the last word one would associate with his actions. It is more a cool promptness of action, an implicit faith in himself."

"He owes me a debt of gratitude," said Aladros, "for bringing him back to England."

"I always feel as if Mr. Serano were our property," laughed Meresia. "You really get a little reflected glory, Alfonso. The story of the gaoler and the valet seems to have leaked out, and enhanced his triumphs. All sorts of romances hover round the name of José Serano. Some people say he has been imprisoned as an Anarchist, and that you proved his innocence, got him out of gaol, and set him on his feet again. Others tell me he was a waiter at the Savoy, a footman, a crossing-sweeper, and a scene-shifter. Some believe him to be the son of a Spanish nobleman, and that good, respectable little lady, Miss Betts, who called herself his aunt. By-the-way, you know those Merrimans we met in the summer, they were relations of hers. Mr. Serano hardly ever visits them. They were not very nice when he was poor, yet Gregory Merriman is a good deal with him, somewhat to his mother's consternation, who believes that all authors are morally irredeemable."

"You are full of information," said Aladros, amused at Meresia's talk. "What else do people say?"

"That I am the heroine of José Serano's book."

Her husband's heavy brow contracted as she spoke.

"How do you know all this?"

"Oh! Elizabeth repeats a good deal."

"Elizabeth is here too much, gossiping," he replied. "She is so observant, always studying her fellows aggressively, and tattling."

"But it is not an unkind scrutiny, and she only repeats what is amusing. Elizabeth does me good, I like her social nature—her quickness to make friends. She is always willing to extend her circle of acquaintances when it includes interesting people, and the lucky ones who come under the category of those worth knowing. I can't imagine London without Elizabeth."

"She is too self-reliant for a woman," said Aladros.

"Your ideas of women are quite dreadful, you would like them to be all submissive and humble like me. The fact is,

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though Elizabeth pretends to be absolutely indifferent to public opinion, she is extremely anxious to be liked and appreciated. She knows you are not her friend, and I sometimes think it annoys her, and makes her shock your prejudices out of revenge. She has not been here for three days."

"I offended her last time."

"My dear Alfonso, that is not the reason. Elizabeth was very ill, nerves and all sorts of other ailments. I feel quite anxious about her. She has had to give up hunting, and is under a London doctor, who is doing her no good."

Aladros was standing at the window, his large frame seemed to block the wintry sunshine.

"Miss James is not exactly dying," he replied.

"No, I suppose not; but I should like to know what she is doing."

"Then I'll tell you. At this moment she is stepping out of a hansom, looking the very picture of health, and ringing at our bell with the strength of an Amazon. She has taken a strong tonic since we saw her last."

"You are not going?" cried Meresia, as Aladros moved towards the door.

"Yes. You need not say that I am in."

She greeted her friend joyfully. "Why, Elizabeth," she cried, "how well you look!"

"Isn't it wonderful? I am a resurrection, my dear! That stupid doctor was treating me quite wrongly, and every day I felt myself getting worse. I took your advice, and went to see Dr. Serano. He knew exactly what was the matter, hit the right nail on the head, cured my insomnia, gave me back my complexion, and here I am, a walking advertisement for your doctor-author. I'll make his fortune for him by recommending him to all my friends. But I suppose he has made that already through his wonderful book. I am quite sorry he is not English. I've asked him to one of our dinners next week; his personality is most fascinating, so different to the usual run of——"

Elizabeth checked herself. "Spaniards," said Meresia, smiling. "You nearly made an awkward slip, but I know you don't like foreigners, nor do I, though I married one. People often marry the thing they most dislike. Mrs. May, who has been married three times, always, as a girl, had a great prejudice against widowers, clergymen, and people with red hair. She was the second wife of her first husband; the next was a dean; and the third, who still survives, has a Paderewski crop that is positively scarlet!"

"Don't tell me these painful things, Meresia, or you will give me a relapse. I want to hear about yourself."

"There is nothing much to hear. I am not wildly elated with the joys of matrimony, nor am I the sorrow-seeking problem nurturer of book fame, who a few months after marriage keeps a consoler of the opposite sex in constant attendance. I just jog along naturally, and now that I am always with Alfonso, I do not find him particularly terrifying. I don't quarrel, because I confess I am a little afraid. He can be so alarmingly important, so crushingly dreadful, and so satirically blood-curdling if I disagree. I suppose in a way he has sapped my individuality, just as you prophesied. He imbues me with his theories and ideas, till they actually become my own. I adopt them against my better judgment. You don't know how many shoots have sprouted since we settled down.

"He still talks as if the great crimes were little, and the small ones immense. Political errors are unpardonable, murder is permissible under many circumstances. For instance, if we were beyond the pale of civilisation, and I were displeasing to him, he would remove me as a matter of course. Alfonso has never committed a murder because he respects the law; or else from a moral point of view there are numbers of tiresome people he would gladly put out of the way. I often wish he would not talk like that to me, it undermines my intellectual powers, turns sense and reason topsy turvy. I'm afraid I have not a very strong head; things prey on me so."

"You are not as young in heart as in years, Meresia, or you would not notice his talk. But everything is taken seriously, and you are too ready to meet your husband halfway, to drink in all he tells you, when a little laughter would show him and you the folly of it. Alfonso is a morbid man. Don't enter into his imaginativeness, or you will get no peace of mind. But here am I, an unmarried woman, giving advice! How you must be laughing at me in your sleeve!"

"Indeed, I am not, Elizabeth. What you say is very much to the point, singularly true. Do you think I have altered since I married?"

"A little, perhaps! You are more of a woman; but I still treat you as the little girl in the white and clover dress, who got engaged under my chaperonage. You were not so well known then, and you did not live in town. Now your dresses are chronicled in the Society papers, and the green eyes, and the golden voice, each get their share of printed approbation. It is worth living—is it not—to be the rage, if only for one season?"

"As cynical as ever!" laughed Meresia. "Do not mock an old friend. Besides, you know, I don't live for Society. It is a very nice, etcetera—a sweet after more wholesome fare; but one would not like a dinner all of confectionery."

"That is why you puzzle people. You have mastered the art of moderation. No one really likes a perpetual round of sweets. People get horribly tired, but they will not own it. So the pleasure routine goes on, till it is a drag and a labour; only there are so few Meresias to find this out and tell the world. I wonder if, some day, moderation will desert you. I shall be sorry, for it is always edifying to have an example!"

"I am not the least moderate in some things. The other day I saw a man ill-treating a horse. I had him prosecuted, and he was put in prison. It was a great nuisance, and I have to keep his wife and children while he is there, for they are very poor. People called me a fool, but I cannot endure cruelty. I would much rather the man had picked my pocket, or broken into my house; I could have forgiven that!"

"You are a strange contradiction, Meresia; one never knows how things are going to take you. You will be swept along by the tide of circumstances, but you won't reach the shore till you have done a good many foolish things, and some wise ones."

Elizabeth got up to go, and fastened her furs as she smiled on Mrs. Aladros.

"Good-bye, dear, and thank you for recommending that clever Dr. Serano."

Meresia went to the window and watched Elizabeth drive away. The faint sunshine had gone, and a silvery mist crept over the houses. The leafless trees in the square looked gaunt and sorrowful as they stretched their unclothed arms to a colourless sky.

Some of the autumn's dead leaves rustled busily down the paths, hustled by vagrant breezes, as if racing the wind.

The whole wore an air of calm, for the leaves settled in a heap under a wheelbarrow, and nothing stirred in the street below. Meresia's face caught the reflected peace. Her eyes half closed—she was thinking.

"I wonder," she said, "why I so dreaded marriage with Alfonso. I must have known of something, something that has not happened yet."

Someone entered the half dark room and shadowed her.

"Wrapt in abstraction," he said, and she saw it was her husband.

"Yes, a mere ideality, of no practical use."

"Everything is abstraction," he continued, speaking in slow meditative tones.

"Even man?" she asked.

"Man is a genus," he replied, "but may be raised to the genus animal, thence to organised being, thence to created being, thence to matter in the abstract, and so on—till——"

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"Oh, don't!" cried Meresia, "that sounds so dreadfully complicated."

"Things must be absolutely empty, or absolutely complicated, but I don't think it matters which. Shall we ring for tea?"

"Yes," said Meresia.

And Aladros rang, while she changed the gloom into the warm shaded light of incandescent gas.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANARCHISM.

A FOOTMAN placed a pile of papers on a table—daily papers, society journals, magazines—for Meresia was a great reader. Many of her ideas on life and her fellow-creatures were formed from the literature of the day. Consequently she held human nature in no very high esteem.

She took up the *Daily Debater*, and glanced at the headings of the articles.

"Spanish Anarchists" caught her eye. "Extraordinary statements of how they are treated."

The subject excited her interest, and she settled down to read the information, but she was not prepared for the shocking stories alleged to have taken place in a Madrid prison, with the knowledge and consent of the Spanish authorities. The incidents, told in the simplest language as true, turned Meresia hot and cold, with burning faintness and frozen horror, as she read. The writer was, he stated, leading a campaign of indignation organised by the Anarchist communists of London, in reference to the atrocities practised upon their brethren in Spain. His identity was not divulged, but as Meresia scanned the lines in voiceless wonder, she traced the familiar hand of José Serano.

She followed the details as if in the throes of a nightmare, not realising the tortures, yet shuddering involuntarily.

"Compressing the head, belabouring the flesh on throat and temples, inflicting the gag, flogging, keeping the prisoners running on foot without granting them sleep, food, or drink." Such were the things her mind feebly followed, and halted at the sickening account of redhot irons applied to the flesh.

"It can't be true!" she cried, crushing the paper in her hand; "it is a vile libel. Alfonso will know; Alfonso will tell me!"

The word "judge" caught her eye lower on the page, and compelled her to read further. Her face had grown absolutely colourless, she went slowly with faltering footsteps to her husband's room.

He was writing letters, and looked up as she entered with a smile, holding out his huge hand, which Meresia did not take.

"Have you read this, Alfonso?" pointing to the column in the *Daily Debater*.

"No."

"Is it true," she asked, "that a man would be kept in a Spanish prison eight days without eating or sleeping, with a gag applied to him, his nails cut off, and his body bruised with blows?"

"What manner of man?" asked Aladros.

"A man who could not even speak Spanish, accused of being an Anarchist, one who on being brought to the judge asked for an interpreter. The military judge shrugged his shoulders, made a sign, and the man was dragged back to his dungeon. Alfonso, you—you are a military judge, tell me, for goodness' sake, you had nothing to do with all this fiendish injustice."

A pause.

"And if they did take him back?" said Aladros, "you don't know what followed."

"Yes, it is here, in all its hideous detail. They chained him to a wall, where the hangmen, the private gendarmes, could kick and insult him. They were allowed to put a wooden cylinder in his mouth, made like a horse's bridle, and fastened by strings behind his neck. Then these wretches whipped him along, and promised him something worse."

She caught her breath, waiting for Aladros to speak.

"Anything more?"

"Finally he lost his reason from sufferings and torture. But there are many other cases equally revolting. One of the victims was tortured into accusing other innocent prisoners; he knew his accusations were false, but he was helpless, for they burnt him with irons and made him speak! Oh! tell me you know nothing of all this—that it is a series of shameful lies!"

"I don't see that it matters to you, Meresia, one way or the other."

"Not matter to me! When you are my husband?"

"It is not a woman's business, and it served the felons right. They merely got what they deserved. I have seen worse things than what you tell me."

He smiled—his hard, cruel, merciless smile—and turned again to his letters, dismissing the subject.

Meresia stood watching him—the paper still in her hand—an awful loathing crept over her, a giddy sensation came in her head, and a choking in her throat. She felt an overwhelming desire to strike him, only the idea was so absolutely absurd.

She pictured the scenes vividly to herself, and in each the pitiless scorn of Alfonso Aladros played a prominent part.

"Why are you waiting?" asked her husband.

"I thought perhaps you might have something to say, some explanation or excuse. Don't you want to read the article? I expected you would answer and contradict it, but that is impossible—now——"

"It does not interest me," he replied. "My name is not mentioned, I suppose?"

"Then *you* were the judge?" said Meresia. "Were you in court when some of the gendarmes even left the hall exclaiming: 'Assassins! assassins!' and when the examining magistrate opened a door by striking it with his foot, and pushed the prisoner out of sight? After that, immediately the hangman got hold of him, and took him to an upper room, from whence—a few moments later—came loud screams of agony. The judge called for another prisoner to be brought into court, that the *conseil* might pay no attention to what had just passed."

"Really, Meresia, you tire and disturb me! I came to England to rest and forget the duties and responsibilities of my position. I know all this, it is not news to me, nor is it my fault that it has got into the hands of the English press. I have always done my best for the Spanish Government, and one cannot let these dogs of Anarchists treat us like children. We must serve them as they would serve us, without pity or consideration. Your methods are different in England—less severe, less final. I remember the case you speak of perfectly, so now I hope your curiosity is satisfied, and that you will let the subject drop."

"But it is too horribly inhuman to imagine!" she gasped. "Can't you see what it is to me?—to learn that you——"

But she broke off sharply, unable to control her voice, which in its shocked scorn and painful trembling sounded sweeter than ever to Aladros. He was suddenly aware that Meresia felt upset at what she had read.

"Why, my poor little darling, how pale you look!" he said, pushing back his chair and raising his cumbrous body to its full height. He drew her towards him, but she pulled away, and shrank back, consumed by horror at his touch.

"Your hands are red with blood," she said. "You are worse than a murderer!"

Alfonso laughed aloud.

"I do believe you are almost angry with me," he said. "One would think you were in sympathy with these blackguards we have been unnecessarily discussing."

"Of course I am in sympathy with anyone who has

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suffered such vile treatment!" retorted Meresia with blazing eyes. "Who would not be?"

"England is so lenient, and it is all what you are accustomed to. We won't discuss it any more, if it troubles you. But these things are not worth bothering about. Just banish them from your mind."

His coolness staggered Meresia. She was maddened by the thought of his cruelty, and disgusted at his utter lack of feeling.

Mere contact with him, the fact of breathing the same atmosphere, seemed stifling her. She threw open the door with a defiant gesture, and left the room.

Aladros shrugged his great square shoulders, and returned to his writing. Meresia's attitude amused rather than annoyed him, for he could not realise she was in earnest. It was a pose, a part, pretty and effective, if a little tiresome. She was such a child, and her views were in his eyes so utterly grotesque and ridiculous.

To fuss over people she had never seen—criminals, who were rewarded according to their works! What could their sufferings be to her? Surely he knew what was right and just without Meresia's interference. It appeared surprisingly funny and audacious to Aladros, who suffered his actions to be criticised by none.

Could he have seen into his wife's heart and read the secrets there, it might have stirred even the iron nerves of an Aladros to something of shame or remorse.

Instead he dismissed the whole incident lightly from his mind, and lit a cigar, before continuing his letters.

Meresia's moderation deserted her as she flew upstairs. Her mind was racked with a tormenting conflict. She had felt absolutely convinced that her husband was innocent of those frightful charges. But not only had he acknowledged himself guilty, but shown his contempt for her sympathy, her horror, as if she had been a silly child, of no account. She was bitter against him to a degree; her loathing and hatred took shape and substance; it seemed to transform her from a young and lovable woman to an excitable she-fiend. Her breathing was the quick, sharp panting of one labouring under rage and pain. She knew now what the promptings of her instinct had foretold. The cruelty of the man to whom she had given herself made all that was good in Meresia tremble and shrink, though at the time she was in ignorance of the cause.

She had noticed, since their wedding, that José Serano, in spite of her husband's kindness, endured Alfonso politely, but despised him in his heart. She often wondered at the coldness of the younger man, to whom Aladros was sincerely attached. Once she mentioned this to her husband.

"Poor José can never forget he has been my valet," Alfonso told her; "the barrier is broken, but the remains are always lying in his way. He stumbles against them, and they remind him of the old position."

To-day, as Meresia paced the corridors, feverishly the truth formed itself, like the coloured pieces of a kaleidescope, into a whole, and the picture was far from pleasant.

José had used her husband as a means of reaching England, where he had been educated with all an Englishman's horror of brutality and torture. He knew the secrets of the gaol, and they had made him bitter and revengeful. No wonder he burnt to expose the crimes of injustice.

She must see José and question him herself.

Meresia's blood was up—she would have stopped at nothing—her indignation knew no bounds, and her heart burnt within her. If Serano hated his master, his hatred could not have been greater than the wife's for the husband. She ordered the carriage, and put on her furs; they were particularly becoming to Meresia.

Aladros heard her hurrying down stairs, but he did not trouble to inquire where she was going. Only when the brougham had driven away he wondered why she had not asked him to accompany her.

"Perhaps, after all, she was really rather cross over that article," he said. "Who the devil could have written it? Not Serano, I'd take my oath! A Spaniard never reviles his own countrymen; besides, he is too busy with his patients to give a thought to the grievances of Anarchist Communists! He may have talked imprudently in journalistic circles, and some sensation seeker gathered the fragments together with judicious pumping, in the hopes of making a scandal."

In the meanwhile Meresia, whose first rage had subsided into morbid and bitter meditation, reached the doctor's house, to find he was engaged.

"I'll wait," she said. "Say I *must* see him. I am not a patient."

She was shown into a private room, and left to the chaos of her own thoughts and the monotonous ticking of a large clock, supported by bronze devils with grinning faces.

Meresia turned her back on these sinister figures, and thought of Aladros.

"What was Hell?" she wondered, "with its thousand representations, its disputed existence, its pictured spirits of evil, malice, and uncleanness. Surely those infernal regions, vaguely imagined by some, must be a home for the tyrants and oppressors—the cruel, bloodthirsty men, like Alfonso Aladros."

Her gloomy reflections occupied a full hour before the door opened, and José Serano stood in her presence.

Meresia rose, pale and beautiful in her heavy furs, which, being loosened, slipped away from her figure, and left her unfettered to battle for the truth.

She held out her hand to José, and he noticed that it trembled.

"What is the matter?" he asked, in his quiet, kindly voice.

The green eyes were raised to his, full of a new indescribable misery. Meresia tried to speak, but her voice failed, and for answer she drew the article from her pocket and spread it on the table.

(To be continued.)

KEY TO THE PICTURE PUZZLE In "P.W." Extra Xmas Number.

20	102	61	21	12	32	42	37	86	59	50	55	34
36	100	38	81	69	105	73	40	77	57	107	95	67
97	9	3	53	101	72	7	87	19	27	23	46	15
106	64	93	11	22	5	26	43	70	116	17	89	112
117	33	49	78	114	113	98	66	90	80	110	41	25
104	94	108	76	115	96	4	99	8	48	1	68	52
75	111	30	14	24	6	84	62	44	79	10	45	92
28	85	51	91	88	71	60	13	56	29	65	82	31
2	58	35	54	63	47	18	74	83	103	109	39	16

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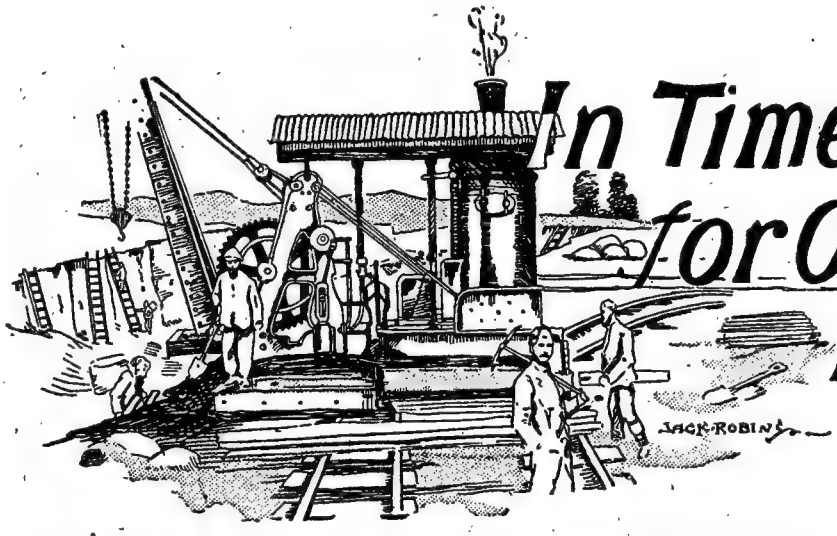
Picture Solution will be Found on Page 13.



In Time for Once in his Life

THE fierce midday sun was pouring down in full force upon the barren, sandy district in which one of the greatest triumphs of modern engineering, the Baltic Canal, was in process of construction. The men had just knocked off work for their dinner, and some were taking advantage of the meagre, indifferently cooked food sold in the canteen, while others, notably the Italians, were preparing their own meal. The dark-eyed sons of southern Europe, with their gaily coloured head-gear and picturesque appearance, formed a bright spot in the monotonous scene. As they cooked their macaroni they talked and gesticulated in the vivacious and excited manner usual to them, but which gave them an appearance of quarrelling among themselves to the more phlegmatic Germans, who plodded silently through their dinner or smoked the pipe of peace as a digestive

A tall, stalwart Holsteiner, with honest blue eyes and a frank, open countenance that told of no past other than that of a healthy, uneventful youth, and a square jaw beneath a firm, resolute mouth, that gave fair promise of success in whatever he might undertake, was climbing up one of the ladders that led from the deep cutting.

His thoughts were evidently pleasant ones, and had brought a smile to his lips. When he reached the top he shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked towards the road which led from the works to the few houses in the neighbourhood. Over the chaos of sand-heaps, stones and machinery, he saw a sight which made his heart beat quicker, and a soft light come into his eyes.

A small figure was walking quickly along, and he knew every turn and bend of the girl's head, every movement of her arm as she swung the empty basket at her side. It was Doris, the innkeeper's daughter, who had been to take the chief engineer his dinner to the red house on the hill.

Now she was on her way home, and Wilm Lorensen made up his mind to forego his dinner, if need be, so that he might accompany her.

But the pleasure quickly faded from his face, for there, a few yards from him, was the Italian, Peretti, scrambling up the bank with all speed, fired no doubt by the same intention as himself.

Wilm Lorensen set his teeth and determined to forestall him. He hated Peretti, for his smooth tongue and soft voice found favour with the women, and of late, Doris had seemed only too willing to listen to the wonderful tales he could tell of his sunny home and the gay, careless lives led by his countrywomen. Lorensen was a man of few words himself, but in his heart he had long made up his mind that Doris was to be the sunshine of the little homestead where they would settle down later on and live as their fathers had done before them.

He started off, and on his way noticed a third pair of eyes fixed on the girl he loved, and those belonged to his countryman, Peter Svensen, a slow-blooded, sleepy fellow, the butt of his comrades, who contented himself with looking, and made no attempt to follow her.

The nimble Peretti was first; but Lorensen, nothing daunted, resolved that if he couldn't have her to himself he would not leave her with that grinning Italian.

"Good-day, Miss Doris, may I walk a little way with you? I am going to Holtenau."

"Eh, mate," sneered Peretti, "where are your eyes? The young lady has an escort already. You go your own way and don't try to spoil sport."

"If Doris herself tells me to go, I will, but not unless," doggedly returned the German.

The girl was twirling a marigold between her white teeth, and looked roguishly from one admirer to the other, and then said:

"As far as I know the road is open to all that like to make use of it."

"Yes, of course," agreed Lorensen, gruffly adding, "more's the pity," with a look at his rival.

"*Caramba!*" said the Italian scornfully. "He is a German boor! Peretti will not quarrel before a lady. Ah! if you were only to see our beautiful, sunny land you would never wish yourself back in this desert!"

"I should dearly like to see it, Peretti, but I think it would be too hot for me there."

"Sunshine, sunshine every day, and dancing in the moonlight by night!" he went on ecstatically. "To see the girls with their corals, their scarfs and their castanets! Necklaces, bracelets, and rings of coral!"

"I think coral is very pretty," said Doris. "I saw a lot at the Kiel fair last year."

"One of our snug northern homes is better than all your coral and finery," put in Lorensen.

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"Oh, yes, snowed up for half the year!" laughed the Italian. "The blue sky is our roof-tree and our curtains are the branches of camelias and olives."

"Shut up!" said Wilm crossly. "I'd rather have a blade of yonder coarse grass than all your olives and camelias!"

Doris objected to this contempt for the beautiful flowers she had so seldom seen, and that only made her lover more quarrelsome.

"I don't know why you Italians don't stop in your beautiful, sunny land," he grunted.

"But there is one thing in which you Germans excel us," continued the irrepressible Peretti, "and that is, your women! Their hair is like the ripe corn, their eyes like the skies above, and their smile as peaceful as the moonlight. Our women are too fierce, too restless, too wild! I adore German women!"

Lorensen now began to whistle loudly, but the Italian was not to be driven from the field, he only remarked blandly:

"Comrade, look here, if my talk wearies you, you needn't stop to hear it. The road is open and the young lady and I can get on very well without you. Can't we?" he added, turning to Doris.

"Lorensen wants to see my father, I expect," replied the girl, "so it would be foolish to turn back now we are so nearly there. The way has seemed very short to-day. Good-bye," she said smiling at Peretti, "and as you have told me such pretty stories, you may have that," taking the marigold from her lips, "I have nothing better to offer you. Camelias and myrtle don't grow in our poor soil here."

They had reached the little inn which stood close to the new canal cutting, and, having taken leave of Peretti, who went away kissing the flower and murmuring his ecstasies in his musical mother-tongue, the other two passed through the house into the garden where stood three tall elm trees close together, and under whose shade were rude benches and wooden tables, where the host, an old sea-captain, did a thriving trade among the workmen and engineers.

Lorensen's mood was a stormy one, and he could not find words to express his disgust at the girl's conduct.

"Don't you want to see father?" she asked, after a pause.

"No. I'm off."

"Off? Where?"

"Away from you, you shameless flirt!" and he made a move as if he were going; but she followed him and laid her hand on his arm.

"Why are you so cross, Lorensen? Just because I let that fellow chatter to me?"

"Because you like that black devil! Anyone can see it by the way you look at him. Well, there are plenty of other girls, that's one thing!"

Doris looked at him and shook her head, saying:

"Lorensen, you are really too silly."

"Yes, but I'm not blind, I watched you all the way, and then you gave him your flower! You—you——" he stopped short, choking.

"And why did I do all that?" she asked, bravely going up to the enraged man. "Why? simply to protect you from the results of your foolish jealousy! You don't care how you insult Peretti, and father says Italians are dangerous people to offend."

"Oh, you needn't trouble yourself about me," he said sulkily.

"Then it doesn't matter if Peretti sticks a knife into you when your back is turned? That's what they do when they're angry."

"Oh, you can talk fast enough! Why you've turned poor Svensen's head with your false ways."

Doris laughed outright. "Well I never! Fancy you being jealous of poor Svensen!"

"You lead every man by the nose, you flirt!"

"I am good friends with all, if that's what you mean. You're very cross to-day. Good-bye, then."

He turned to go, and something in his face made her make one more attempt to pacify him.

"You know very well, Lorensen, that though I joke with all, I only love one." Her voice trembled a little and her blue eyes glistened as she said these words.

After a moment's struggle with his ill-temper, he turned penitently towards her, thoroughly ashamed of his conduct, and, taking both her hands in his, said:

"Doris, I'm only a plain fellow, I've no coral to offer you, nor pretty stories to amuse you with—but I did think that in a year or two—we, you and I——" he stopped and his eyes said the rest.

"Yes, Lorensen, and so did I. You know I don't care for all those things really."

"Then you will put up with me as I am, and you don't mind waiting a little while for me to make a home for you?"

"I want you just as you are, and I'd rather wait all my life for you than marry anyone else."

The remainder of the interview was of a description that need not interest outsiders, and a few minutes later Wilm Lorensen was making his way back to the works, with a light heart and swinging gait, for Doris was now his very own, and she had promised to meet him that night on her way from Friedrichsort, when they could enjoy their new-found happiness undisturbed.

There was no one to be seen on the dusty road, but crouching behind a sand heap was Peretti, and with murder in his eyes he watched Lorensen's happy face as it passed him. The Italian felt instinctively that his rival had stolen a march upon him, and with a curse he turned from him, and regained his place in the cutting.

When work was resumed Lorensen felt the want of his dinner, and, contrary to his custom, drank pretty freely from the flask that he carried at his side. As Svensen passed him wheeling a heavy barrow, a feeling of compunction prompted him to say:

"It's hot work; have a drink, Svensen?"

The latter was lost in thought, and at first did not understand what had been said to him; however, he refused the proffered drink, and went on his way, absent-mindedly, as was his wont. Suddenly he stopped and looked down into the cutting, measuring the distance as it were with one hand, and thereby endangering the safety both of his barrow and himself.

"Svensen, you blockhead, what are you doing?" shouted the overseer. "Look alive, man, we're waiting!" Then he added to himself: "That fellow gets lazier every day!"

"Oh, he's in love!" said a cheeky youth standing near. This remark was greeted with a roar of laughter and one asked:

"How do you know that?"

"Why, the man he lodges with told me that he brushes his hat every Saturday and sleeps with a book called 'Advice to Lovers' under his pillow."

Fresh peals of laughter were called forth by this conclusive evidence; but Lorensen looked after the clumsy retreating figure with a touch of sympathy and compunction. While he was in the act of cheering himself

with another pull at his flask, a barrow struck him violently from the back and made him stagger on to the very brink of the cutting. With a great effort he righted himself, and, shouting angrily as he turned round: "Can't you look where you're going, you fool!" he saw that it was Peretti. Was it an accident? Doris's warning came back to him, and the horrible thought chained his tongue.

The others began to swear at the Italian for his clumsiness, but he burst forth fiercely:

"Why did he get in my way? It's his own fault, he should have moved."

"That's no reason for trying to kill a fellow," said the others.

"*Caramba!* Who've I killed? I must wheel my barrow, and whatever is in the way, be it man, wood, or stone, it must move or take its chance!" So saying he shook his fist at Lorensen and went off cursing under his breath.

Just then Svensen came up, saying anxiously:

"Oh, you're all right, Lorensen? I saw what he was up to and I wanted to come and warn you, but somehow I was too late."

As he stood there like a great shame-faced schoolboy, the others laughed again and said chaffingly:

"You should have come a bit sooner, old man; you couldn't expect Lorensen to hang over the side till you come to pull him up."

"No, I was too late, as usual. I don't know how it is, but I never am in time for anything. Perhaps I shall be some day."

"Then you must wake up, and especially when you go courting."

"So I will," he answered almost briskly. "That I will."

When tea-time came Svensen, instead of joining his companions, brushed himself up, washed his face and hands carefully, and started off to the inn at a most unusual pace. He was quite out of breath when he arrived, and not a little nervous when Doris came to ask him what he would have. When she brought the beer he had ordered, he timidly asked her to stay and keep him company while he drank it, as he had something to say.

"Well I can't stay long, for I have to go to Friedrichsort for my father this evening."

"What do you thing of me, Miss Doris?" he said at last, fidgetting on his chair.

"Of you, Mr. Svensen?"

"Yes, of me."

"Well, they all say that you are an honest, upright man, and I'm sure you are."

"Yes, Doris, I am honest. And now, if you'll listen, I'll tell you the truth."

In halting, broken sentences he told her his story—how his father had been lost at sea and his mother had never cared for him. His childhood and youth had been loveless and lonely, and at last he had taken his life into his own hands and found work on the canal. There he had first seen her, and with her had come the first real sunshine into his heart. She had never laughed at his awkward ways, and always had had a kind word for him when they met. If only she would accept his love he would work for her night and day, and hold up his head among his fellows.

"Dear Mr. Svensen——" she began.

"It has cost me a great deal to say this, Doris; but I can't rest till I've told you, for I love you as I never loved anything on earth. Don't laugh at me!"

"How could I laugh? You are doing me a great honour——"

"But—you won't?" he faltered, with a stricken look on his face.

"I should have been proud to be your wife, as any woman might be, but—but you've come too late, Svensen."

"Too late—too late, again!" he murmured hopelessly.

"Yes, I'd given my heart away before I ever saw you. Don't be angry with me! You don't know how it hurts me to say this——"

He rose quickly, shook himself, passed his hand over his eyes, and again repeating the fatal words: "Too late," turned away, saying gruffly: "Yes, yes, it's all right. I'd no business to come. Good-night," and without another word he was off. Doris gazed sadly after him, as he stumbled down the road, not seeming to see or care where he went.

He crawled away to a lonely part of the deep cutting and threw himself down behind a heap of stones, alone with his misery. One by one the busy sounds of the day were hushed. The sun was setting, but its rays did not penetrate to where he was. He felt stifled after a time, and an irresistible longing for the sea came upon him. He climbed up and made his way to the coast, where the waves were glowing in the sunset.

He threw himself down under the shade of some stunted bushes with a sense of relief. Who had come before him? was now his thought. Had Peretti won Doris's affections? He hoped not, for he knew him to be a bad man; yet he had often seen them together.

The time passed almost unperceived by him, and the moon rose, flooding sea and land with her soft light. For a while all was silent, then he heard footsteps, and saw Doris in the distance walking with a man whose arm was round her waist. Svensen's heart beat till he could hardly breathe as he eagerly sought to discern the face of his successful rival. Thank Heaven, it was not Peretti, but his own countryman, Wilm Lorensen! He could hear her merry laugh and the deep tones of her lover's voice as they came towards him. Suddenly, a dark figure rose some distance behind them, and appeared to be stealthily gaining upon the unconscious pair. Svensen's love for Doris made him keen to scent danger for her, and he felt something was wrong. They had a gate to pass through, and he realised that if he could get there before they did, the harm might be averted. For once he would be in time. Oh, if only he might be! With every nerve strained he ran silently behind a hedge, keeping his eyes on the dark figure that was making for the same goal as himself. Svensen was first, and as the figure came up he saw something bright flash in its hand.

He dragged the man out into the moonlight and recognised the features of Peretti. With iron hand he held the Italian in his grasp, but the bright blade descended on his breast and all was dark before his eyes. He had just time to shout hoarsely "Lorensen beware!" then there was a sound of rapidly retreating footsteps and all was silence.

He did not know how long it was before he opened his eyes to see the face dearest to him on earth bending over him, with tears of pity in her eyes.

He heard Lorensen's voice asking him questions, but he could only say the one word: "Peretti." Then he took their hands and tried to put them one in another, and with a final effort he raised himself a little:

"God bless you, my girl. It's best so. Thank God, I was in time for once!" And, with a happy smile, he died.

M. F.

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Story of a Potato, Three Young Persons, and an Old Musician.

Mdlle. Aglae, milliner, was in high spirits on a particular Sunday morning, at a time, too, when she was preparing potatoes for dinner. She sat at the open, sunny window, high up on the fifth floor, and looking out on the Rue Lepie, Paris. Quite by accident, one of the tubers slipped from her hand. It fell straight and heavy on the new silk hat of a passing gentleman, and the *chapeau* was staved in.

This gentleman had come direct from his hatter, and, of course, was furiously indignant at the disaster to his new and shining head-gear.

He looked upwards, and saw a window on the fifth floor hastily slammed down. He waited no longer for any further indications of the defaulter. Full of passion, he rushed up the stair, determined to inflict condign punishment on the villain who had knocked his hat into a shapeless mass.

A few springs, and he was at the second stair landing. At that very moment a door opened, and out popped a gentleman in such hot haste that he actually rushed into his arms. They stared at each other as if about to resort to more violent measures, when an exclamation burst simultaneously from both:

"Anatole!"

"Edgar!"

Anatole Baudruche and Edgar Bricheton were old college chums. They had never met since their student days—that is to say, for over twelve years. This mutual recognition had the effect of cooling their anger, and at once they entered into friendly conversation.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Edgar. "What is the matter with your hat?"

"Don't speak of it," replied Anatole. "A potato from a fifth floor window has played the very deuce with it."

"And you are going up to restore the potato? Well, that is generous."

"Not at all. I only wish to point out the consequences to the guilty individual, and endeavour, if possible, to obta in some recompense for the damage."

"Oh, as to that, you may save yourself the trouble," said Edgar.

"And why?" demanded the astonished Anatole.

"Why? Because Bidoche is a cantankerous old dog. He would close the door in your face before you could utter a word."

"Bidoche?"

"Yes, the one who dropped the potato. It could have been nlo other person. Everybody quarrels with him, the od wretch, and it is a general belief that he purposely makes himself disagreeable."

"You live here, then?"

"No, but my aunt has apartments, and she tells me that not a day passes but what she has a skirmish with Bidoche. Now, if you wish to have it out with the old curmudgeon, I will be delighted to accompany you. There is strength in union."

Anatole and Edgar mounted three more flats. They stopped before a door from which deep yet melodious sounds were issuing.

"Here you are," said Edgar. "The villain has got a bassoon now."

He gave a determined pull at the bell, and the bassoon suddenly ceased. They heard the clatter of his wooden shoes on the floor. Then the door was opened, and there appeared a little old man, with a pleasant, laughing countenance, holding the above-mentioned instrument in his hand.

"Well, gentlemen?" smilingly asked the little man.

"M. Bidoche, I presume?" said Edgar.

"Yes, the scoundrel Bidoche," added Anatole, shaking the deformed hat in one hand, and with the other thrusting the potato under the nose of the astonished musician.

"M. Bidoche?" said the little old man with courteous amazement. "I do not know him!"

"What!" exclaimed Edgar, "are you not Bidoche?"

"No," he answered with the most provoking good nature, "There must be some mistake, my name is Molesquin. I am solo bassoon in the orchestra of the Theatre des Gobelins, and I only moved into this house to-day."

"Oh, hang it!" exclaimed Edgar, "just to think that the old scoundrel has cleared off when we were about to chastise him for all the trouble he has caused!"

"Then," said Anatole in a more humiliated mood, "it was not you who threw this potato?"

"I never eat potatoes," replied the musician, still smiling; "I only partake of green vegetables. However, if you gentlemen care to enter my humble apartments, I will play you over my part in the *Tour de Nesle*. It contains some remarkable passages, which I am sure will do you good to hear."

Anatole and Edgar both felt they had some amends to make to the old gentleman, and considered this could be the best accomplished by accepting the cordial invitation. So into the house they walked, and when seated, the musician, delighted with their company, offered them cigarettes. The musician then took his position at the stand, and, grasping his instrument, at once began to execute the bassoon part of the *Tour de Nesle*.

As he grunted out the notes, Edgar at first could scarcely refrain from laughter at the comic incident, but gradually he assumed an appreciative countenance, and ultimately went nearly off to sleep. As for Anatole, seated as he was beside the open window, with the precious potato in his hand, he could not get his mind off the catastrophe to his hat. He paid little attention to the music. All at once, however, a loud false note from the bassoon caused him to start. At the same time the potato escaped from his hand, bounced out of the window, and fell from the height of five storeys.

* * * * *

Mdlle. Aglae was greatly alarmed at her carelessness in allowing the potato to fall. She hastily closed the window, so that in the event of an accident nobody could suspect her. Then she sat down, not without anxiety, to await developments.

Great was her fear as she heard the footsteps of two

men rapidly ascending the stair. "It is the police," she thought. Her heart beat wildly and a cold sweat broke over her forehead. She imagined she was about to hear a loud knock at the door.

However, the noise of the footsteps ceased, and she heard the door-bell of her neighbour ringing. The door was opened, and after a few moments closed on the visitors, whoever they were.

Although she regained somewhat her serenity, she dared not yet stir. She feared that the guardians of the peace, having ascertained the innocence of her neighbour, would lose no time in calling her to account.

She hastened to conceal the basket of potatoes, which might have served to convict her, and then, in anticipation of the police, assumed a bold, defiant attitude. After waiting a few moments more, and hearing no other noise but that of the persistent bassoon, she now felt quite sure of her safety. Nevertheless, she desired to make assurance doubly sure. So she picked up her milk-can, slipped down-stairs on tip-toe, and walked straight to the dairy.

Mdlle. Aglae now felt she could at least establish an alibi. She purchased her milk, and, perfectly at ease, returned to her house, carefully guarding the contents of the pitcher. Suddenly she received a sudden shock. At the same time she was splashed with milk from head to foot. The potato which had slipped from the hand of Anatole fell with remarkable precision into the milk can.

"Murder!" cried Aglae. "What miscreants there are, to be sure." And she shot up the stairs, quite prepared to attack the first person she met. This person was Anatole.

* * * * *

Anatole was, of course, alarmed at the flight of the potato. He had no desire to listen longer to the bassoon, especially when he recollected the police regulations forbidding anything to be thrown from the windows. Up he rose and made a sign to Edgar, who, however, had fallen asleep. He rudely awakened him, and taking a hasty good-bye with the bassoon soloist, to whom they promised, out of politeness, to come at a future time and obtain lessons on the instrument, they made a rush for the door.

The moment the door opened Aglae was on the landing. Aglae and Anatole faced each other—Aglae with the milk streaming from her face and hair, Anatole with his *chapeau* sadly battered. A moment's consideration, and the situation was understood.

"Sir," exclaimed Aglae, "you are a wretch!"

"And you, madame, have fingers like putty," retorted Anatole.

"And you are most impertinent."

"And you are not so polite as I could wish. Let me give you this advice, madame, when one cannot peel a potato without letting it fall from a five storey window, one should never attempt to cook: one should dine at a restaurant."

"I have no lessons to receive from you, sir."

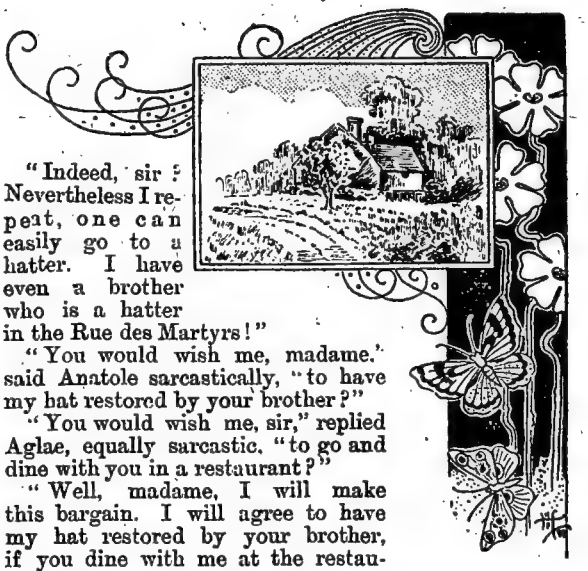
"Indeed, madame? Still I repeat it—one should dine at a restaurant. I even know a very good house on the Place Pigalle; yes, madame, I do."

"Very well, sir, just go there."

"A pretty spectacle indeed I would make at a restaurant with my hat battered out of all shape."

"Well, sir, when one's hat gets into that condition, one can easily go to a hatter."

"I have no lessons to receive from you on that score, madame!"



"Indeed, sir? Nevertheless I repeat, one can easily go to a hatter. I have even a brother who is a hatter in the Rue des Martyrs!"

"You would wish me, madame," said Anatole sarcastically, "to have my hat restored by your brother?"

"You would wish me, sir," replied Aglae, equally sarcastic, "to go and dine with you in a restaurant?"

"Well, madame, I will make this bargain. I will agree to have my hat restored by your brother, if you dine with me at the restaurant."

"Very well, sir, I will agree to dine with you at the restaurant if you have your hat restored by my brother."

"And I," put in Molesquin, who had as yet said nothing, but had been listening with astonishment. "I will pardon you for interrupting my dear studies on condition that you accept from me a box at the Theatre des Gobelins."

"We accept," cried Edgar, who by this prompt intervention cooled the ardour of the disputants, and turned the conversation into a milder channel. Molesquin withdrew to his house.

"In the first place, madame," said Anatole, "allow me to introduce you to my excellent friend Edgar Bricheton, my old fellow student."

"What!" exclaimed Edgar. "I have never been at college!"

"Now, now, you called yourself just now Edgar Bricheton."

"I? Never in my life," he replied, "my name is Paul Dupont. Then you are not Anatole Baudruche?"

"Not at all; my name is Henri Durand."

"Then," said Edgar, "we do not know each other!"

"That makes no difference now," said the pretty Aglae, "since you have already become acquainted with each other."

The two young men admitted the justice of the remark, dropped the conversation, and enjoyed some pleasantries over the circumstance which had brought them together.

So they dined at the restaurant, and Anatole had his hat repaired by Aglae's brother, and they all enjoyed the performance of the *Tour de Nesle*.

* * * * *

The incident had still a more pleasant termination.

Anatole married Aglae, and they still preserve the blessed *pomme de terre* that brought them together. Not long after, too, Molesquin took for a wife a little chorus girl of the Theatre des Gobelins.

LOPEZ SURRANE.

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ON THE BEST - - - - - AUTHORITY.

MR. M. MACKENZIE, of 42, Garfield Street, Bootle, Liverpool, has received a volume of *Pearson's Magazine* for the best anagram on the words: "Answers to correspondents."

A VOLUME of *Pearson's Magazine* will be sent to the reader who forwards this paragraph, legibly written, in the smallest space. All attempts to reach this office by Monday, January 3rd, in envelopes marked "SMALL."

S. L. G.—No, the Victoria Cross has never been awarded to a woman; it is not designed for female decoration. In Germany heroines are decorated with the Iron Cross, and in France with the Legion of Honour.

TONY.—Luckily for London, it is quite true that there are some beneficial results derived from fogs. Scientists say that when a fog subsides it deposits various chemical and irritating particles which were held suspended in the atmosphere, and clears it from what was prejudicial to man.

D. L. C. — *Noblesse oblige* means that noble birth imposes the obligation of high-minded principles and actions.

AGNES.—If you wish to become a nurse you must go through the three years' course of training. Mere attendance at classes would not suffice, as you seem to think.

KIT.—The cork tree is very seldom met with in England. In Goodwood Park, however, there are some very fine specimens.

D. A. P.—No, Blondin was not the real name of the celebrated tight-rope walker. Being of a higher class of society than persons adopting such a vocation usually are, he adopted that name in order to preserve his *incognito*. His real name was Jean François de Gravelet.

A. M. Y. writes: "You seem to be very well up in the origin of various institutions and customs, etc., I wonder if you can tell me something about the origin of the 'Punch and Judy' show?"————This show is a relic of an ancient mystery, "Pontius Pilate and the Jews." Types or symbols of Mr. Punch have been discovered amongst the hieroglyphics of Egypt; and Herculaneum and Pompeii have given up the puppet after being buried sixteen centuries, so that it would be almost impossible to say how or when it first originated.

A. C.—Grey horses are the longest lived; creams are decidedly delicate, and are seriously affected by very warm weather.

W. R. M.—The exact spot opposite to London on the other side of the globe is the ocean south-east of New Zealand, near a small island, which was given the title of Antipodes Island, in honour of its position with reference to the greatest city in the world.

J. M.—"Chamber music" is music fitted for performance in a room as distinguised from concert music, or any music depending on many performers and plenty of space.

COLD FEET.—A good remedy is to wear a sock of thick brown paper inside the boot or shoe.

S. W.—No, the doctors in Sweden never send bills to their patients, the amount of remuneration being left entirely to the generosity of the latter.

GEE-GEE.—The great bell of Moscow is not the largest in the world. The distinction belongs to the bell hanging in the Temple of Clars at Kiuto, in Japan. It is peculiar in having no clapper, and is struck outside with a sort of wooden batt ring-ram. In point of volume and tone, however, our own bell of St. Paul's Cathedral can beat any other in the world.

BOB.—The raising of silkworms may certainly be a source of amusement to amateurs, but certainly not a means of making money. The cocoons are sold by weight, and you would have to keep about 2,800 worms in order to obtain 12lb. of cocoons, so as to yield a pound of reeled silk.

A MOTHER writes that the other day her little boy picked up a £10 note in the street, and promptly brought it home to her, who, after making inquiries, succeeded in returning the note to its lawful owner. Judge her dismay, however, when the generous-hearted individual placed twopence in her hand, "as a reward for her honesty," which it is needless to say was refused with indignation—and I don't wonder at it. Individuals who consider a twopenny reward sufficient recompense for returning a £10 note do not deserve to be treated honestly. When a person finds anthing of value, his or her best plan is to take it off to the police-station, and should it ever be claimed, the owner is practically compelled to leave a sufficiently satisfactory reward behind for the finder.

KILKENNY.—In some of the farming districts of China, pigs are harnessed to small waggons and made to draw them. I never heard of this being done in Ireland, as you seem to suppose.

CURIOS would like to know what becomes of the enormous quantity of oakum which is picked in our various prisons.————Oakum is chiefly used for caulking ships; it is also largely used for surgical dressing in the hospitals of Great Britain and on the Continent.

GOLDSMITH.—Certainly there are other birds besides the cuckoo who do not build nests. The goat-sucker and curlow lay their eggs on the ground, and sometimes move them from place to place; many aquatic birds lay their eggs on the rocks; other birds avail themselves of holes in trees instead of building nests, which answer the purpose equally well.

M. C. S.—There are schools in England for the special benefit of those who stammer. We do not give such addresses, but any doctor would recommend one to you.

G. R.—It is not usual for a man and woman to shake hands when first introduced, unless in exceptional cases. However, it would be exceedingly rude to ignore a proffered hand.

W. F.—A "trice" is the sixtieth part of a second.

W. K. M. asks: "What is the 'golden rose'?"————It is a present made every year by the Pope to the Royal lady who has most distinguished herself by loyalty to the Pope and to the Church of Rome. This rose is made of pure gold, and is chiselled with exquisite workmanship, being valued at £2,000. The golden rose has been presented to the ex-Queen Isabella of Spain, and to the ex-Empress Eugénie of France.

A. T. C.—Your informant is quite right; there is a place where there is only six days in a week, namely, Chatham Island, in the South Pacific. The explanation is that time is lost when travelling eastwards, and gained while travelling west. Chatham Island is situated just on the line of distinction between times and dates; it is very near the Antarctic circle, and the days and nights seem to get mixed up, which does not matter so much as it would if it were a more populated country.

Notice to Competitors.

IN all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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